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# THE ART OF LIVING



# THE ART OF LIVING

SOURCES AND ILLUSTRATIONS  
FOR MORAL LESSONS

BY

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TRANSLATED BY  
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LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.  
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO. 1910

PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF  
THE MORAL EDUCATION LEAGUE



BJ  
1581  
F68

## INTRODUCTION

THIS collection of illustrations for moral lessons originally formed part of a much larger book by Dr. Foerster on *The Moral Teaching of the Young: A Book for Parents, Pastors, and Teachers*. The illustrations proved so suggestive and seemed so fitly to embody the principles laid down in the other part of the book, that it was thought well to publish them separately; and owing to their liberal tone, high ethical spirit, and suggestiveness their circulation in Germany and Switzerland has been very wide.

The book is not an ordinary text-book, and is unique in many ways. First, it is not for class use alone, but should prove valuable to parents and pastors. Secondly, it is suitable not alone for elementary schools but for secondary school teaching also. Thirdly, it should appeal to people of very widely differing religious views, as it has done in Germany.

The collection was the outcome of Dr. Foerster's own experience in giving moral instruction to classes of boys and girls of various ages in Zürich. Many illustrations are suitable only for older children, and many again only for younger, but such is the vitality of the

examples themselves that they may be used for very different ages by a teacher of adaptive mind. Owing to the origin of the book it has been found necessary to omit some illustrations more suitable for German children.

It is, properly speaking, not only a collection of most apt examples of suitable illustrations for moral lessons, but is also a book of suggestions to the teacher as to where he should turn for material for these lessons, and on what plan he should choose his illustrations. Dr. Foerster deprecates any rigid application of the examples he gives; he rather desires to show that moral teaching must be animated by the teacher's own personal outlook and experiences, and to point to the rich source of inspiration and illustration afforded by daily life. Not less important does he regard it that the illustrations should be amplified from the child's own experience. The will of the child is in no way stimulated by mere narratives if there is no connection made between them and his daily life.

Four ideas underlying Dr. Foerster's moral teaching are clearly embodied in the lessons:—

- (1) Utilisation of the child's love of self-activity.
- (2) Bringing the consciousness of the higher moral truths home to the child by always leading from the simple to the complex; by starting from the child's simple experiences of daily life.
- (3) Utilisation of natural tendencies and the playing off of one against the other.

(4) Cultivation of a pride in self-control and self-expression and advancing from this to higher motives.

One of the most striking characteristics of the examples is their constructive tone and the insistence on presenting all forms of self-control "not as repression, but as self-expression, a freeing and an exercise of the higher powers. Give the child a greater knowledge of life, open his eyes to the effects of actions, show the forces at work on him and the possibility of maintaining his own inner powers against these."

These few remarks may prevent the reader from looking in the book for what it does not pretend to give, and it may help him to see the great suggestive value of the illustrations.

ETHEL PECK.



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CHAPTER I

SELF-ACTIVITY





# THE ART OF LIVING

## CHAPTER I

### SELF-ACTIVITY

#### PATHFINDERS

WHEN I speak of Pathfinders perhaps it makes you think of the brave Pathfinder in Cooper's book *The Redskins*, who could find a path through the most impenetrable wilderness. Or you call to mind brave discoverers like Columbus, who opened up a way for civilisation and science, and many like them, who persisted in their solitary way till they had convinced the world they were right. You remember the explorers in Darkest Africa, and Nansen who faced the terrors of eternal ice and Polar nights. But to-day I want to tell you of a much humbler explorer.

There was once a little girl who liked to make voyages of discovery in her own home. One day she explored as far as the attic room of the servant maid, and it made her quite sad to see how dull it was, with no pictures to enliven the grey walls. So she ran quickly to her own room, fetched two pretty pictures, and hung them in the attic room. Was she not a little Pathfinder? She had found one path into the land of Kind-

ness of Heart, which no one, not even her parents, had found before her; for you must not think that everything in that land has been discovered and that you have only to learn what others have found before you. It is a vast unexplored country whose borders only are inhabited. Yes, there is an undiscovered land for each of you to explore, and for this you need have no warships, no bloodshed; you only need a little thoughtful heart.

#### THE DEAF MUTES

HAVE you ever visited an institution for deaf mutes? What must be the feelings of these poor sufferers? Beautiful and tender words do not exist for them. They can only converse with their fellows by devious and roundabout ways, like prisoners making signs from their windows.

But do you know there are many people who are deaf mutes, yet neither deaf nor dumb? They have a poor disjointed life because they have never learned to use their ears and their tongues. They are always so taken up with themselves that when anything concerning others is spoken of they simply do not hear it. They hear very well indeed, for example, when they are called to dinner, but when mother hints that she is tired and would be glad of help, then they become as deaf as a post. Of course if some one shouts a request at them they do notice it, but if asked modestly and

quietly they hear nothing. If they have offended or hurt their sister so that she cries, they observe it, but if her voice only trembles because of their rough treatment they are quite deaf to that. They roam through the woods for birds' eggs and can distinguish the different calls of the birds, cries of warning, joy, anger, or pain, but to the tones of the human voice their ears are strangely deaf. Their hearing tells them nothing of the souls of the people they meet, teaches them no sympathy, and so of course they do not know how to act, and are quite as helpless as the truly deaf. We can say of them also, "How unfortunate they are!"

Have you heard of the Indians whose hearing was so trained that by laying their ears close to the ground they could hear the tramp of a horse from a very great distance, and could recognise, by the mere rustling of the leaves, the approach of a man long before his form or face was visible?

We do not nowadays need such keen ears for purposes of this kind, yet it would be a great thing if, for higher ends, we could teach our ears to be a little more alert; could make them so sensitive as to perceive from the tone of voice much that is going on in the mind of another; whether he is sad, disturbed, depressed, tired, or worried. You can learn this just as the Indian can acquire his skill; only you have to pay great attention and notice everything; just as actors have to study diligently how to express the various human

feelings by the voice. If they did not do this no play could be put on the stage. When you play at acting, and want to represent a proud or anxious person, you say to yourself, "What tone of voice does a proud or anxious person use?"

The Indian trains his ear so as to be able to outwit his foes or run away from them. We should train ours so as not unintentionally to hurt or weary those we love. Is it not sad to see a person who cannot tell when another is tired, or anxious to be undisturbed, unless that other loses patience and exclaims against such want of perception?

Take the trouble to notice carefully what any one does when you say something which he dislikes, or something painful to him. Suppose, for instance, you are relating something discreditable of a boy; say, that he had been punished at school or had acted meanly in some way, and you happen to be saying this before the other boys. He may not protest, perhaps. But you can easily tell from his bearing that you have hurt his feelings. But if you have sharpened your ears you may hear this before you have reached the end of your tale by some little interruptions he may make; and then you may desist in good time or change the story. In such a case a deaf person would notice nothing, but go straight on and ride rough-shod over the feelings of the other. It is in such ways that you may lose your best friend or gain one without suspecting it.

Take the trouble to notice the tone of any one whom

you are bothering with questions when he is busy or tired. There are but too many people who never notice anything until there is an explosion. It is particularly important when visiting sick people to notice if they are tired, even before they know it themselves; just as Indians hear the tramp of approaching horses long before anything is to be seen far or near. There are many people, too, who have such fine manners that they can receive a visitor cheerfully and in a friendly way even though they are in the midst of work, or are going out, but you can easily tell from the tones of their voice, if you are observant enough, that their expressions of pleasure are forced and painful. If you should not notice this, you may tactlessly prolong your stay indefinitely, even to wearying the hostess altogether and compelling her to say how very pressed she is. Never forget that with asses' ears one can never be a fine-mannered or cultivated person.

Now a word about the dumb. To these the description, "Feelings without words and voice without sound" is fairly applicable. I expect you know whom I mean by dumb people. I mean those who, even if they have deep and true feelings inwardly, never can utter a friendly or thankful word at the right moment and never take pains to do so. Sometimes dulness or laziness, sometimes shyness or want of practice, is the cause of this. If they are invited out and enjoy themselves very much they yet say, "Good-bye," with an unresponsive face. They may say, "Thank you," but

they never exert themselves to say more, nor make any attempt to convey how much pleasure they have had, nor how much they will look forward to spending another evening with their friends. Of course, if it is not true, do not say it. But if you really do feel so, then why not express it? Is there too much friendship in the world? Far from it. A kind word from the heart is too rare. But when spoken it is carried and treasured in the hearer's heart as a schoolboy values his good report, or a lover the letters of his dear one. How often is the opportunity neglected of saying a word of comfort or sympathy to a person in sorrow or distress! We stand there dumb as stones, all the while longing to speak but finding no fit expression. You should carefully reflect what is most likely to soothe, collect yourself, and say it quickly. What, for instance, would you say if your mother had just lost her own mother or sister? Should you not say, "Dearest mother, I will try and love you all the more?" Or when a school-fellow returns to school after his father's funeral, then you could go up to him and say, "I am very sorry that you are so unhappy. Will you come and see me sometimes?" or something similarly appropriate; but do not remain dumb and make no effort if you have any heart at all. Sometimes people who are going a long journey feel very sad at leaving their friends and relations, but fail to suitably express this, and consequently those left behind naturally imagine that they will not be missed. Yet it costs so little

to say, "I used to be glad to make long journeys, but now since it means that I have to leave you behind, it makes me sad at heart! I shall long to see you again, and eagerly look forward to my return." The others then feel that they are valued and can make some one happy. Then why not speak the few words?

Again, it may be that you have hurt some one's feelings and are quite aware that you have done so, yet it seems impossible to express your regret. You feel you would rather wait till his resentment has passed away, as the clouds after a shower. Unfortunately the effect of wounded feelings does not pass away so easily, but eats like a poison into the soul, and in time may kill love itself. Such dreadful results as this may spring from merely being tongue-tied.

There is nobler work for our mouths than merely eating and drinking. You can hardly imagine how beautiful the expression of your lips may become if you utter a true and kindly word whenever it arises in your heart. I do not say we should wear our hearts on our sleeves. But we should try to accustom ourselves to forget all indolence and false modesty, and let others know when we are grateful to them, or when we love them and hold them dear.

This has to be learned like any other beautiful and consoling art. We learn to play the piano and violin and to sing in order to give pleasure to others. Why not then learn the art of kind and loving speech? Besides, one great beauty in this art is that you are the

poet and composer yourself and can express what your own heart has felt, whereas with the other arts you must usually express the feelings of others.

The beginning is the great difficulty. When once you have mastered that, all will be well, and the art will one day be yours. You have heard of the fear which overcomes singers and actors when they make their first appearance on the stage. It is called "stage-fright." When they have once fought and conquered this they are never frightened any more. It is just the same when you first force yourself to utter a few friendly and heartfelt words, or beg forgiveness for a fault. You have simply to brave it out. Or else you will always remain a mere novice in the art of human speech, and will never become a true artist.



CHAPTER II

SELF-MASTERY



## CHAPTER II

### SELF-MASTERY

#### WHY IS SELF-CONTROL NECESSARY?

SELF-CONTROL seems a very dry word when we are young, and are hindered from doing what we wish. We feel like fiery horses held back by the bridle, or like a thirsty person beside a sparkling stream and not allowed to drink. It suggests some nasty medicine prescribed by grown-up people. However, I want to show you that this is not really so. Even if there were no grown-up people, and all you children lived alone upon a big island where no teachers and no guardians were to be found at all, you would realise, after some little time, that self-control is one of the most precious of human possessions. Many things in life which seem more valuable are really far less necessary or precious. For example, people could live quite well without railways, the telephone, electric light, and similar things; but not so easily without self-control.

Imagine that like Robinson Crusoe you were all wrecked on a desert island, and that like him you were obliged to make a dwelling-place for yourselves and search for your own food. Do you think that, in order to make

such a dwelling, wood and strong arms would be all that was necessary? Self-control would be more important than all these. Why? Well, because otherwise in one short half-hour you would be disputing as to ways and means, how this or that should be done, and who should do it. Self-control is as necessary to the common life of mankind as is immutable law to the stars in the heavens. If every star could move as freely in space as the swallows do, all would be speedily reduced to ruins. The stars, however, have one great advantage over us. They do not need to discover their proper paths for themselves; whereas men have to learn slowly, and through much hard experience, how to guide their movements and to remember that they are not alone in the world. Those who will not learn this truth are in the long run so shattered by conflicts that they can make no forward progress at all.

Let us then talk of these matters so that you may be better able to find the right course and thus avoid such conflicts, from which one can never be certain of coming out unharmed.

You have learned from natural history that those plants and animals tend to disappear which are not fitted to their surroundings; and that only those survive which are best provided with all the most useful organs. For instance, were the lion's hide blue instead of yellow he could be seen in the desert from long distances, and would not be able to creep up unnoticed on his prey. If the lark were red it could not run over the furrows

without being seen by hovering birds of prey. Even birds' eggs are adapted to their surroundings. In human society there is also adaptation. Self-control is to men what eyes are to the bird of prey, and teeth to the lion. He who lacks this quality is bound to come to grief, just as certainly as he is bound to sink in water if he cannot swim. Of course, human society is not so cruel as nature. Any one who has too little self-control will not at once go under. We try to help him to acquire self-control. He is sent to a reformatory sometimes or to a strict boarding-school, and even when he is grown up we try to be patient with him, but we can never really respect him if he does not learn the lesson, and at last our patience gives way. If a man always fails of self-government he will soon be left alone, and no one will have anything to do with him. Society gets rid of him just as the glacier throws out the stones on each side. He will lose all his friends if he never restrains himself and has no consideration for the comfort and wishes of others. He is badly equipped for life, and if he does not try to make good this defect, we may predict that he will have an unhappy life. So you see that self-control is quite as necessary to the common social life as the wings to the bird or fins to the fish. When you hear any one say, "I shall do as I like," it is as if the eagle said, "I can fly without wings."

But we will not speak merely of human society in general and why self-control is necessary in order to be

socially tolerated, but also of individual cases in life which bring regret for lack of self-control.

Great misery and failure often befall those who have not enough strength to control their passions and bad inclinations, and are all but the slaves of the smallest impulse which arises in them. The most familiar instance is the drunkard, who knows quite well that he is on the road to ruin, and yet is too weak to resist. I would like you also to think of some examples out of your own life. You would all like to have a friend. But how can you find a real friend? By advertising in the paper, "Wanted a friend"? The true way of making a friend is to make your own friendship attractive. How does one gain this power? Some people have it by nature, but its influence does not last if it appears in the long run that you are selfish and only thinking of yourself. No, others must feel confident that you do not only think of yourself but have a heart for others too. You must strive to show that this is so, and you can do it very well in many little ways. For example, when a school-fellow has brought no fruit to school and you have a nice juicy apple, you could give him half or even the whole of it. Then the other boy will see that you do not only think of yourself. Friendship springs from quite such small beginnings as this. Try to remember how your friendship with a certain comrade began and you will see that it was really through some little thing which one of you did to please the other. Unfortunately you might find some almost

insurmountable obstacle to prevent you giving him the apple. You would like to give it yet you can't quite bring yourself to do it. What is really necessary before you can give away the apple? Self-rule, self-government. The desire to eat the apple oneself and not to give it away is the real obstacle in the path of friendship. So you see you cannot begin too soon the practice of subduing your appetites and greediness.

One more example: two years ago I had a little French boy in my class who tried hard to speak English, but continually made the funniest mistakes. Whenever this happened the other children laughed unrestrainedly. This made him so shy of speaking that he often could not give any answers. One day, when he was away, I talked with the other children about the matter and asked them to try and put themselves in his place in order to see how they would like to be treated like that in a foreign land, and told them how much better it would be to encourage him. But the next time some of them laughed again in just the same unfeeling way. They were really sorry afterwards, but they were not able to suppress their laughter. Their self-control was not as strong as their good-will.

Do you know what calls for perhaps the greatest self-control? When some one has told you a secret and you have promised not to repeat it. Under a strict promise of silence Emma had a secret told her by a friend, yet the very moment she got home there she was in a corner whispering with her sister. Of course the sister

tells her friend the very same evening, who tells her brother, and very soon it is all over the place.

Some boys and girls seem to be unable to find a real friend, and they fail to have the slightest idea that their own tongue is at fault. You know yourself that you want a real friend to be some one whom you can trust perfectly. You would like to be as certain that your friend will not hand on anything which you have confided to him as you are that the sun will rise to-morrow. If you find out that your friend has ever repeated even a trifle you feel wounded at the discovery that you cannot really trust him. For if he fails in self-control in one thing, you feel you cannot rely on him in another. How sorry he will then be that he was not able to keep your secret. For if he had practised self-control his faithfulness to his friend would have been stronger than his love of chattering.

You see, then, it is even more important to practise honourable silence and gain strength in this direction than it is to develop the strongest muscles, say, by bicycling. For by doing the latter you could, at most, only win a prize in a race, whereas with the other you could win trust and friendship without which we are poor indeed.

You can yourselves think of many other examples where self-control is necessary. But we have no time to talk of them now. Self-control really means that each of us should be master in the house of his own body, and not the slave of his servants, the tongue and



such members. The servants should be controlled by the master, for he has the direction of the whole income and expenditure, and supervises every action to see if it harmonises with the aim of the whole. Whoever is the slave of his instincts and passions will have cause to bitterly repent it, for whatever these force us to do without the guidance and approval of a prudent and thoughtful mind never harmonises with the scheme of the whole and brings only confusion into it.

#### RULE THY TONGUE

IN olden Greece there once was founded an order of pious and contemplative men called Pythagoreans. Every man who wished to join this order had to take a vow to keep silent for three years. If he bore this test he was considered worthy to belong to the order.

I expect you will guess why this test was chosen. Surely, because the hardest thing in the world is to rule our tongues. He who can control his tongue shows so great a power of self-government that he can be trusted in more important things. He is a free man and not the slave of one small member. What is the good of kind-heartedness if the tongue does not obey the kind heart? The greatest misery, evil, and confusion in the world are caused by wagging tongues. A lightly spoken word may cause death and ruin friendships. Some time ago when I was speaking on this subject to a class, a little girl gave a big sigh and said,

“ Oh, yes! ” Even she had already learnt how much unhappiness may be brought about by an unguarded tongue, and how easy it is to say something which may cause us bitter regret afterwards. But is it not humiliating to think that so small a thing as a tongue should rule so great a thing as a man? See to it at least that this does not happen in your case. Consider carefully every word which rises to your lips. If you do let your tongue run away with you, you are like a king ruled by his valets.

There are many occasions when we run into the danger of letting our tongue rule us. This happens most often when we lose our tempers. When we are cool again we find it almost impossible to believe that we should have said the things we did. When anger overcomes us we feel it a relief to express our feelings. Instead of a relief, however, it is really a burden we are laying upon ourselves, and sometimes we have to bear this for a lifetime through indulgence in a moment's anger.

What is to be done? It would be too much to expect you to be silent for three years. But how would it be to found a little order of your own and exact from each new member the promise not to say a word for a whole month when he is angry. After this test has been passed then you may think of other trials of strength. You often devote a great deal of time to strengthening your muscles, but do you know that greater and even more manly strength is needed to control the tongue

than is needed to develop the muscles of your calves or biceps?

Sometimes the temptation is of another kind. We may be drawn into joking at the expense of our friends just for the sake of making others laugh. I remember in my school days how difficult it was to keep anything funny or ridiculous to oneself, even though the telling might wound another. A heartless joke uttered in a thoughtless way and without any wish to injure may lose you a friend for ever. Control your amusement and never give your tongue free play if there is any likelihood of wounding any one.

Here is another very serious fault of the tongue. This is tale-telling and scandal-mongering. What do you think is the good of repeating ugly stories of people's misdemeanours? "One's attention is drawn to the wrong-doing." Yes, but to whose? Your own? No, never, always to the wrong-doing of others. Do you think, now, it does any good when you whisper that Mary told her mother a lie? That does not help any one. Besides, the more ill we hear of others the better we think of ourselves. The more we worry about others the less we examine ourselves. Do you think it helps people to be better to talk about them to others? Not in the least, for they do not hear what you say. It is said behind their backs.

Yet the very worst thing about tale-bearing is that it does not spring from love, and therefore has no good influence at all. Scandal never keeps to

the truth, but even distorts it and readily believes the worst reports.

There are very many people who would not kill a fly, but do not hesitate to injure and even ruin their fellow men by stealing their good name, blackening their reputation, and making a great fault out of a small mistake. There is also a large army of thoughtless people who act as servants to scandal-mongers. They do not see the harm and danger of carrying ugly tales, but only think of the interest and amusement they can cause.

Sometimes in the newspapers you see advertisements of perfect cures for rheumatism and other ills. Do you know what should thoroughly cure you of tale-bearing? To find out that some one has told tales of you and twisted and misrepresented everything you have said and done. You would turn pale with horror to see what a description of yourself has been spread abroad.

I will suggest also another cure. Remember that your good-feeling and your reason are against tale-bearing; your tongue is for it. That is two against one. Therefore the tongue should lose. But it will only be worsted when your good will and reason are on guard against the temptation. It is a very good rule never to repeat anything you have heard against any one.

One of the early fathers of the Church, Augustine, in his writings, speaks of his mother, who was quite a humble woman, and says that the most beautiful trait in her character was that she never repeated tales.

He writes, "When in the company of people whose active ill-feeling showed itself in strong expression against an absent friend she never joined in and never afterwards repeated to the friend the unkindness, but only the good that was said, in order to bring about a reconciliation." That was nearly two thousand years ago, and all those old scandal-mongers are forgotten; but this true mother set her son an example which never faded from his mind.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND ON THE BODY

DAILY observation brings home to us the great influence which the body has on the mind. When we are physically tired or ill we cannot work well with our brains, whereas when we are in health and refreshed our mind seems active and well capable of work. The mind is just like a person whose whole disposition is influenced by the surroundings in which he daily finds himself placed.

On the other hand we often observe the tremendous influence which the mind may have over the body. We see men and women of great age and feeble health exhibit a fresh and clear intelligence. We see invalids bear their suffering with cheerful patience, even devoting much thought and care to the welfare of others. Have we not also noticed in ourselves that a strong determination enables us to force our bodies to make efforts

though we feel that our physical strength is almost exhausted?

It is wonderful, too, how good news may affect the feelings of a sick person and make him forget all his sufferings. This is an example of the influence of joy on the body. It is well known also that a doctor considers it of the utmost importance that a patient should have confidence in him. Belief in the doctor often does more to ease pain and bring relief than the remedies applied to the body itself. Why is this? Largely because our moods and feelings affect the circulation of our blood and thus our bodies. The nerves have a wonderful influence upon our bodily states, though we are far from understanding their operation. The mind has the strongest influence over the nerves. We all know quite well how easily we can allow ourselves to be overcome by fear and to be led by it to many physical weaknesses affecting our whole physical being. We know that at such times a firm command of the thought and will can lead us to a control of our senses and our physical powers.

It is also an accepted fact that real and infectious diseases may sometimes be prevented by mere exercise of will and a brave and tranquil spirit. In great epidemics the most anxious are the first to be attacked. If you sit in a draughty railway carriage and think to yourself, "What a frightful cold I am catching," you probably *are* catching one. For the fear draws the blood vessels together, and the flow of the blood becomes

slower. In this way the resisting power of the whole body is quickly reduced, and a way is made for the access of every kind of illness.

There is nothing more important, especially when we are young, than for us to realise the immense power of the mind over the body; there is nothing more useful for us to learn than the exercise of that power, or more valuable than to accustom our bodies to obey its will. If we neglect all this we become the slaves of our bodily weaknesses and feelings, a trial to ourselves and others. Some day we may bitterly regret that we have not learnt all this when we were young. When we are older we have not the same power of control.

Be cheerful even if you have a headache or the toothache. Do not give in to every tired feeling. Sit up straight and bravely at table although you are feeling very tired and would like to lounge. Step out firmly when you feel inclined to slouch. Do not let yourself whine and grumble at the cold. Manfully swallow the food you do not much like. Do not let every uncomfortable feeling find expression. That will be the way to win your freedom and allow you to do good work in the world later on.

#### ALL THE MORE

VERY irritable people often say, "I can't help it. I am so nervous to-day. Please keep out of my way and do not worry me."

It is true that the physical body may be nervous, but the mind is for the purpose of controlling the body. Sometimes at the window of the most ruinous and tumble-down cottage in the country you may see pots of blooming flowers and behind them the red cheeks of a laughing girl. In the same way a cheerful soul may dwell in an infirm or nervous body. It is in your power to have a tranquil soul if you will only make the resolve, or if you find a friend to help you and whisper in your ear, "Do not allow your nerves to be your tyrants. Show them who is master. You have more power than all your nerves put together."

You know the story of Demosthenes and his stammering. My idea of the story is that when he was a boy and was asked what he wanted to become, he answered, "A great orator," and what laughter there was! "You with your halting tongue and your stammering!" Then the boy became angry and said to himself, "Shall my body decide my profession and not I myself? Because of my defects I will try all the more." So he went to the sea-shore and practised speaking, as you all know, and carried out his resolve. This physical failing helped to make him great, for it cost double the effort to overcome the obstacle. It is just the same with nerves. A person who has irritable nerves need not necessarily be an irritable person. It all depends whether he can say to his body, "No, you shall not master me." He can then become a hero of self-mastery, for he can achieve more than the quite healthy



just because he has to exercise so much thought and care in order to conquer his weakness. Then comes an unexpected reward. His nervousness itself can be quite cured if the will and mind do not give in to it. The mind is the best cure for nerves. It brings the peace that comes from within, and this is much more valuable than outward tranquillity. By an inner unity and peace great weakness can be cured even when it has been inherited from many generations. Hail to the conqueror!

There is a story of the German Emperor which may teach us something. His left arm is weak and withered and he feared he would not be able to become a good rider, as in order to control a horse and make him feel your superiority you must have control of all your limbs. But he said to himself, "I will try all the more." He exerted all the power of his will to compensate for the disadvantage of his bodily weakness, and he became the best horseman in the army. He sits on his horse with a security, grace, and ease which few attain in spite of their soundness of limb. Why not? The mind and the will are only stimulated to the greatest deeds by the resistance of the body. He who suffers from physical weakness and infirmities should never imagine it to be his vocation to become a weakling. Quite the contrary. He has all the greater opportunity for becoming a hero. He has a greater task given him than is given to those who are quite healthy and faultless. Great tasks make great men. Therefore let each say, "I will try all the more."

## BAD TEMPER

LET us talk about a bad habit which embitters many people's lives. It seems a very small thing, but it is really a very big one.

I am thinking of the habit of indulging in sulky or irritable moods. We sometimes say to a little girl who looks ill-tempered and behaves as if she would never be happy any more, "I am afraid you got out of bed the wrong side to-day."

A very small thing may have caused this bad temper. Her milk may be burnt; she may have had an errand to run against her will; or her brother may have thumped on the door and woke her up suddenly. What would you do with a little girl like that? Whatever you do, be sure not to tease her or say, "What a face! It's enough to take away one's appetite." That will not do any good. She knows quite well she is in a bad temper and is upsetting every one. She realises how very silly and weak she is to be annoyed by trifles when there are so many who are happy in spite of misfortune or suffering. She knows she is encouraging a bad and dangerous habit, which in time will give her face a disagreeable expression and make people avoid her.

Yet in spite of this she cannot get rid of it. A bad spirit seems to cast a spell over her which lasts for hours, just as a headache or a slight illness does. But

the reason she cannot free herself is because she does not know how.

To-day I will try and suggest a means of help.

The struggle for self-control is like trying to control and direct rivers and streams. It is not enough to build dams—they sometimes burst. It is more important to divide the waters at their source, and thus prevent them increasing in volume and power till they carry all before them. Let us see how this resembles the struggle with bad temper.

When once the bad mood has come upon you and overcast your spirit it is very difficult to seem cheerful, and, even if you do, your cheerfulness seems forced. No, it is better to weaken and divert the angry waters of bad temper early in their course.

Imagine, for example, that you want to go for a little excursion with your school-fellows. Your mother is afraid, let us say, that you may catch cold, and she takes so long in looking out warm things for you that you are late in starting. You rush to the station just in time to see the train steaming from the platform. It is so disappointing and annoying! And it is all mother's fault! Your cheeks flush with anger and bad temper. And you feel that for the rest of the day you will be gloomy and bad tempered.

I would like to offer you a remedy for such moods. Whenever anything goes wrong in this way, make it an occasion for showing your strength of character. Instead of fretting, turn this event to a good use

and make it a benefit to yourself and an opportunity for doing a good turn to some one.

Think of some pleasant surprise you could give a friend, or a fellow-creature in sorrow or want; or even plan to do something which will give yourself pleasure.

Try this, and you will find that bad temper has been stopped at its source. It is as if unpleasant things had been made pleasant. If the misfortune had not occurred you might not perhaps have done a kind deed. There is an Italian proverb which says, "When God shuts the door he opens the window." What does that mean? It means that you can get some good for yourself and others from almost every misfortune, if you only stop to think, instead of merely rebelling against the trouble. Generally, alas! people only see the closed door, and beat against it in a rage, without noticing the open window.

#### ROSE BLOSSOMS AND MAIDEN BLOSSOMS

LOOK at a flower bed in the winter time and at a bed of roses in the summer. What a difference! In March there is nothing to be seen but the black manured earth, giving forth mouldy smells, and the grey stems of the rose-trees standing up bare and stiff. But in summer the mass of glowing blossom fills the whole garden with fragrance.

What a wonderful magician the rose-tree is, to be able

to bring forth such lovely roses from such dull stuff as the earth! From the dark and dirty soil the roots suck up nourishment to make the sap which will transform the food from the earth into roses whose beautiful scent and colours bear no trace of their earthy origin.

Or take a violet in the wood! Whence this lovely scent and rich colour? All charmed from the black soil! Every plant is a magic workshop where raw materials are turned into beautiful flowers.

Human beings often might well be shamed by the flowers. Our faces should be like roses. Life is our soil and our souls are for the purpose of changing all the ugly difficulties of life into strength and sweetness of character. And we do our work badly if we allow anger, disappointment, and black moods to show themselves in our faces.

How many girls seem to forget that there can be no maiden blossoms without this work of the soul! How can they spread sweetness and love when they allow the troubles and annoyances of daily life to take the sunshine out of their faces and make them ungracious and disagreeable. Grey and empty are the lives of those who neglect their magic power, for the disagreeable things of life are the very best materials from which to draw strength of character and sweetness of temper.

I can imagine a girl who would pull herself together most resolutely just when something annoying had happened, and be kinder and sweeter than ever—in fact she would be turning dull earth into roses.

## PRECIOUS VIOLINS

HAVE you ever been told of old and precious violins which have been played upon for so long and so beautifully by great violinists that even the touch of an unskilful player calls forth pure tones and sweet sounds from them? How does that happen? Think of what I have told you about the human face; how all the moods of the soul help to make its lines and wrinkles, and how it finally takes that expression which has been carved upon its features oftenest. Something the same happens to the wood fibres of the violin. They vibrate so often with pure and true tones that they at last fit into each other harmoniously and respond with noble vibrations even when the player's touch is unskilled and rough.

So it is with the human soul. It is difficult, yes, almost impossible, to answer a rude and ill-mannered person in a calm and friendly way, or not to show irritation with an irritable person, if your own mind at the time is filled with angry and contemptuous thoughts. Your soul is the violin and you are the violinist. If you have played good and happy thoughts on it and allowed all the fibres of your being often to vibrate with generosity and sympathy, then even when another plays unskilfully upon your feelings, you will not say harsh and unkind things or have ill-will in your heart. Your tones will be harmonious though they

may be sad. The strongest people are those who have stored up so much that is good and beautiful in their souls that no one can disturb their tranquillity. They listen quietly to the worst and let their reply spring from their own deep love.

Naturally you cannot achieve this. Neither can I. For we have not been playing long enough yet on our soul violins, and it takes many years of earnest work so to ennoble our hearts that they absorb the wrong and only reflect the good. If you do not begin the work now it will be more and more difficult later on.

I will give you some idea of how you should set about getting this harmony of heart and sweetness of expression. You must not imagine you have conquered when you are merely keeping your hands from violence and your tongue from harsh words, while your mind is full of angry thoughts. No, self-control must begin further back than that.

If you have a playfellow who annoys you very much you should ask yourself if he has had such a happy life as yourself; or if he has had so much care and tenderness shown him; if he is delicate or nervous, if his parents have had as much time as yours to devote to him? In short, when you take the trouble to inquire into his life then you may understand and feel sorry you were so impatient with him and your anger will turn to sympathy.

If any one gives you a bird or other pet for a birthday present you like to find out what country it

comes from, how it lives, what suits its nature, and the proper treatment for it in every way. But when you are given a comrade to play with you think you need not trouble. You think you can treat him properly without knowing anything about the kind of life he has had or the home he has lived in. Then it is no wonder you spend the time quarrelling with him. Besides hurting him you do yourself great injury, for your soul is void and empty of all friendly thoughts, and it is written on your face that you are a coward in the battle against passion and wrong. In short, it is clear you are a bad violinist.

#### HOW SHALL WE RETURN GOOD FOR EVIL?

##### *The Box on the Ears*

I EXPECT you will all remember the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Yet which of you has ever followed this commandment? Does it not seem almost impossible to do this?

A famous painter once said, "Whosoever shall smite thee upon the right cheek, smite him twice upon the left." And I suppose you will all agree with him. A blow, and especially one in the face, makes the blood rise angrily, and a blind impulse drives one to retaliate. I say "blind" because people who have acted in a passion often declare they felt at the time as if they



were in a dream and acted almost unconsciously. The blow falls, and at once their arms move for the counter blow. They are like automatic machines. You stick a penny in the slot, there is a rattle, and the chocolate drops out. Violent people are the same. Strike them or speak roughly to them, and there is a disturbance in their minds and a rough answer or a blow is the result. Is it fine for a man to be only like an automatic machine? If you think carefully you may begin to understand why Christ declared we should return good for evil. Are you not in reality a slave when you simply imitate the wrong that is done to you in order not to appear cowardly? Do you not show yourself really stronger when, instead of being infected by the bad example, you act as seems to you right.

Some years ago when I asked a class why Christ commanded us not to return blow for blow a boy answered quite rightly, "Because we then become bad ourselves." What did he mean? He meant that the blows we give do us the most harm, because they make us brutal. Unfortunately most men are so blind that they think the evil they do to others hurts these others only and not themselves. Look at your face in the glass when you are angry and quarrelsome and you will soon perceive who suffers the most hurt.

So you see that Christ's saying is not so useless and impossible to follow as might appear. And Christ must have been deeply convinced of the truth of his teaching, or he would not have been willing to die for it.

Perhaps you will say, "Yes, we do see that it is better for ourselves not to give blow for blow and return evil for evil, but to turn the other cheek for the second blow is too foolish and makes one ridiculous." Yes, of course, that is taking the words too literally. We should not take literally many other sayings, yet their real meaning may help us and greatly lighten our path in life.

What is the meaning of this saying of Christ's? I would like to try and show you why we should not return evil for evil. If we do so we become wrong-doers ourselves. Evil is thus not lessened but doubled. It reigns in two hearts instead of one. Would it not be better to infect the evil-doer with our good actions, instead of being contaminated by him? How is this to be done? "By example." Yes, and only by that, and good is as contagious as evil. Then the good would be doubled. If a boy had struck a comrade, think how confused that boy would feel if the comrade turned round and said, "If it amuses you, do it again, but don't think I am going to follow your example and try the same amusement."

If a little girl was ridiculed and offended by a school-fellow, and she then turned round and did some good turn to the offender, what an effect it might have!

Do you not think that these actions would be a far greater sign of strength and courage than to return angry words and bad actions? Do you not think that such generous behaviour would bring a wrong-doer far

more quickly to his senses, and make him feel ashamed even if he made no outward sign of it. If, however, you act in the same manner as he does he learns nothing from you and will continue to behave in the same old way.

Do you see then what I want you to understand? Whoever returns good for evil and takes an offence in a generous spirit is no coward and weakling, but a victor, for he conquers the other and influences him by his own good-will. But he who gives blow for blow is conquered and enslaved by the wicked spell of bad example. *He* is the coward and the weakling; the greater his retaliation, the weaker he shows himself.

#### THE CONQUEROR

##### *A Talk with Schoolboys*

FRED had gone to a new school, and in the play hour he was going down the stairs with the other boys to the playground, when Harry and Jack said to each other, "Let's do something to him and see how he takes it." Harry gave Jack a push so that he fell heavily against Fred. Fred in his turn naturally fell against the next boy who gave him a punch, and soon there was a fine scrimmage on the stairs. When it was all over Fred looked round and saw Harry and Jack standing above him laughing at the joke. What was Fred to do? Go upstairs and push them down too? You think so. Well now, let us consider the case for a moment. In

your lessons you have learnt about the course of the stars, and about the courses of rivers and their outlets. Now I should like you to learn also something about the courses of human actions and where they arise and where they finally lead. You have heard how Stanley traced the course of the great Congo River? This river flowed in the first part of its course to the north and no one knew where it ran into the sea, till Stanley found the great bend which turned it again to the West Coast.

Human actions are often like such a river. If you watch one of their bends only you are likely to be very mistaken as to the whole tendency of their course. Think of a lie. At first it might seem as if a lie brings relief and saves trouble. But if you watch carefully you will see that it makes many bends, and leads through the valley of secrecy to the shoreless ocean of unreliability where shipwrecks abound.

But now let us go back to the story of the push on the stairs; let us follow the effects of this action. Suppose Fred gives Harry and Jack a good push back, will he be secure in future against their tricks? No. Why not? You think they will fetch other boys and let him have a bad time of it.

Now you understand the words of Christ, "He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword." One attack calls forth a counter attack, and he who is victor for a time may finally be beaten by the brutality he has awakened and strengthened in others.

But suppose Fred did not push the others, but took

no notice. What would happen then? Would they leave him alone? Probably. For nothing would have pleased them more or given them a better opportunity for continuing to tease him than his anger and retorts. But if he kept his temper they might leave him alone. You think they might think him a coward and imagine they could do what they liked to him?

Do you not think it would be possible for him to show that his calmness was strength and not cowardice? Do you not think the other boys would gradually understand this and respect him? Do you not think that school life brings out what sort of character a boy has? It needs a good deal of energy and quiet strength to return good for evil and not evil for evil. For surely at first a boy who acted thus would be ridiculed, teased, and misunderstood. And ridicule is more difficult for a boy to brave than blows.

Yet if he had energy enough to persevere the other boys would say after a while, "Oh, he's a good sort of fellow. He does not tell tales and he's a fine chum."

No one would dare to knock him about for they would respect him, though not fear him in the ordinary sense. So he would have won after all. And the best thing about acting in this way is that it encourages others to do the same. Jack and Harry will not be so keen on knocking others about and teasing them as they would have been if it were not for Fred's example. It would make them a little ashamed and make them feel

that there is something higher in the world than "ragging."

I quite admit that at first the boy may have a bad time, and it may be long before it is quite clear to the others why he does not retaliate and return evil for evil.

### THE POWER OF GOODNESS

IN the far-off olden times there lived a mighty king, who used his great armies to invade the countries surrounding his own, burning the towns and villages and taking the inhabitants into captivity. He had the history of his deeds carved into stone, and when he felt his death approaching he had a great tomb built of enormous stones, and ordered his body to be embalmed with precious spices and ointments so that even Death should not destroy his memory and fame.

Yet our faces do not lighten up nor our hearts beat faster when we hear his name and story. And the day will come when storm and rain, heat and cold, sun and frost, will surely destroy his mighty monument to its last stone, and the sands of the desert will cover every trace of his life and former greatness as if he had never been.

In the far-off olden times there lived a man who had no soldiers, who burnt no houses, spilled no blood, and took no man captive. He had his name carved on no brass nor stone, but he engraved it on the hearts of

men. He stretched out his hands to sinners, smoothed the forehead of the sick and afflicted, shed the light of his pity on the poor in their misery and distress, and lived a life of mercy and patience, till he was brought to the cruel cross. To those who most persecuted him he gave his deepest pity, and yearned by his example to save them from their own cruelty and hardness of heart.

He built himself no great tomb as did the kings and emperors of olden times. Yet everywhere, in mighty cities and in tiny villages, a house consecrated to his memory points to the skies. High above human dwellings, even near the eternal snows, the bells ring to keep fresh in our memory his labour of love. And to this day his birth is celebrated over the whole earth.

The power of goodness is greater and more lasting than all the clamour of war and glory of conquest. It draws the heart of the wanderer even as the light of home guides and cheers the traveller through a vast and gloomy forest. Fear not that love and kindness are ever wasted. Every gentle word, every loving deed, is eternal. They conquer scorn and hate; they grow, multiply, and replenish the earth; they bring comfort to hearts weary with care and oppressed with trouble, and into forlorn and neglected lives they bring the healing sunshine of joy and gladness.

## MAN'S CONQUEST OF NATURE

WHEN you read in books of the battles of the world from the conquest of Canaan to the latest war it may make you feel that the history of the world consists of one long story of bloodshed and strife. It seems as if men are little better than the animals which snarl and bite and drive each other off the pasture ground. You may feel inclined to say—if we are so much like animals, let us go back to the woods, climb the trees, and live in the fresh air. Why should we sit for five hours in school learning all kinds of things by heart, if the end is only fighting and killing?

Truly, there would be reason to despair were the history of mankind made up of struggle and bloodshed. But many of you must have read of other things beside battles, even in books of adventure! There are the exciting stories of explorations, discoveries, and inventions. Here is the great history of man, more interesting and more wonderful than the stories of the battles. Man's great battle with nature is as thrilling as any book of a war between nations.

From observation and history we know how powerless the savage tribes are before the forces of nature. Then we see how, step by step through human thought and co-operation, the powers of nature are controlled and used by man, and the laws of nature are discovered. The great tangled forests and savage beasts disappear,



buildings are raised, and bridges span the raging torrents. There are many wonderful stories in the book of man's conquest of nature. There is the fascinating story of his control of electricity to make wheels turn and machines work, and to give us white light in our houses and streets, instead of leaving it to merely flash for a second in the stormy sky.

The power of steam is now used to carry great weights up and down our hills, and to drive powerful engines along our railroads, and to propel swimming palaces across the ocean, and to make channels for our canals. Dynamite opens a way for us to each other through mountains and rocks. Does not this tell a more wonderful story than the history of battles? The story of science, industry, and invention is the history of man's progress.

In the courtyard of the offices of a great dynamite factory in Hamburg is a statue of a woman holding in her right hand a torch. She plants her foot on a writhing, gnashing demon clutching the ground. This represents the victory over the powers of external nature. The torch is the light of science. Our fathers and grandfathers in the last century achieved marvels. Mankind is bound closer together than ever before. A network of iron and steel covers the earth. Cables, telegraph wires, and railroads run almost everywhere. New powers are forced into the service of man every day.

What will your part in this story be? I believe that the task that awaits you is infinitely greater and nobler,

and also infinitely more difficult. Without the fulfilment of this task all the achievements of our forefathers will be as nought, nay, more, will be a curse. They fought to subdue the unruly powers *without* themselves; you have now to fight and conquer the savage elements *within* man himself—elements which like the demon are always working to crush and destroy what love and reason create. To tame these natural forces of our own hearts is now more urgent work than to bore tunnels and invent new forms of electrical appliances. When men act like brutes and savages, these things help them not at all to be better towards each other. What is the good of their being able to telegraph from Paris to London or rise into the air on ships? In spite of the glare of electric light in our streets, dark greed is abroad among men, and, with the help of the telegraph and steamers, they defeat justice, oppress each other, and with dynamite they kill each other.

A cultured Chinaman once said to me that he did not observe that Europeans had become better people by their railways and hotels. They were only enabled to do more harm than other peoples. Was he not right? Think over all this. You should consider yourselves as princes who will one day come into power, and you must begin to reflect how you should use the power you will have, so that you can make it a blessing instead of a curse to men. Even if you never rule in a real palace, remember that every one who sets a great example and lights a hope for others sits on a kind of

throne and has a good power over men, even if he is only a shoemaker.

It is true that already men take means to curb uncontrolled desires and tyrannous actions. Physical force and many sermons are the chief means used. Yet we know how little is the good beating and preaching do. There are many men who wish they could conquer their savage natures, but they do not know how to do it. It is well understood how highly a boiler can be heated without bursting, or how fast a locomotive can go without getting out of control, and how much steam should be let out of the safety-valve to reduce or increase speed. But we are as childish and inexperienced in the manner of treating men as are the Fiji Islanders in the processes of a laboratory.

The great German poet Schiller, in his poem "Das Lied der Glocke," describes the great and wonderful power of fire, a benevolent power so long as it is controlled and guarded by man. But if this power gets out of control it wrecks, ruins, and destroys. This is not only true of the fires of nature, but is true of the fires within man's heart. If we only gave as much thought and care to the observation, control, and use of the passions and feelings of man as we do to the fires of nature, what a great and powerful good man might make of life. We know how to capture electric currents, control, and make them work for us, for lighting, heating, travel, yet we know so little how to use and turn to good ends the powers within our souls. Have you

ever seen one of the great tragedies on the stage where a misunderstanding arises, and the passions aroused grow stronger and stronger till at the end perhaps half the persons in the play lie murdered. It reminds one of a great thunder storm, which tears down trees and sets fire to the houses and bushes, floods the fields and ruins crops, and after the storm in the forest all is still and only the drops fall slowly from the boughs.

It is much the same at the outbreak of a war; some misunderstanding and deceptive action are usually the cause here also; despatches become curter and ruder, and at last troops and roaring cannon are brought face to face. It is again much the same in home life. Can we not find lightning conductors for human passions? Can we not learn to control and bring to our service these feelings and forces within man?

Investigations are being made to know if dynamite can be so treated that, instead of exploding all at once, it will slowly develop and propel masses along like locomotives. Likewise, could we not learn to use our feelings so that they do not burst forth in anger and irritation or selfish ambition, but shall be brought under the control of the reason and do useful work for us all?

Think how matters stand when you or others have been giving way to anger. You are exhausted and have not achieved your desire; in fact, matters usually are worse at the end than they were in the beginning. What happens in places where there is a flood? In some countries

people would stand with set faces and pray to their gods and leave everything as it is. In other countries they would call the engineers and have dams made and the course of the streams diverted. Thus the powers of nature can be tamed and turned to good use. Why not do the same with passions? Why let the flood of wrong feelings sweep over the garden of love? Be engineers of self-control. Find out what are the best thoughts to use to dam the stream of anger. To remember to "return good for evil" is one useful thought for this purpose. Always try and think of the undoubted truth that violence and force never achieve the end desired. You learn at school what materials can be combined, and which will not combine, and what effect various acids have on different metals. But you seldom learn in contact with others which treatment will not be suitable for certain people, and which will have a good effect, though these things are more important for the common welfare than a knowledge of chemistry. Most people still believe that force and sharpness attain their ends better than reasonableness and kindness. Yet it only needs a little careful observation to see that this is not so. Reflect and watch. Ask yourself, How do I feel when others speak roughly to me? Do I feel willing to obey them or not? But to learn to control the feelings and forces within us is work that each must undertake for himself. You must make your own observations, experiments, and experiences.

One word more. The knowledge of the power of steam

and its controlling force is not enough for an engine-driver or engineer. He must have had practical experience and practice. It is the same with the attainment of a knowledge of how to handle men. You must practise on yourselves. You must learn to control your own feelings and actions. We will talk more of this another time.

#### HOW WE BECOME SLAVES

WHICH of you does not remember that splendid story of "Gulliver among the Lilliputians"? Do you recall the picture of the giant Gulliver chained down by the dwarfs? They could have done nothing to him when he was awake, but while he was asleep they overcame him and bound him with a thousand tiny threads, so that he could not rise.

Bad habits have the same effect on us. They are the dwarfs that bind us when we are not awake. Neither lying, stealing, anger, envy, nor drunkenness overcomes us all at once. No, they creep upon us unawares and cast thread after thread quietly around us. Suddenly we discover that we are bound; we have been mastered in our sleep and have become the slaves of little dwarfs called habits. Then it is generally too late to do anything.

So it is with the habit of lying. We do not become liars in a day. If lying seized on us so suddenly, it would be easy to throw it off. No, it is by tiny

threads that little by little we become fast-bound. It takes a long time to become a slave. We begin with quite small exaggerations, excuses, and inaccuracies. Tom lingers looking at the shops on his way back from school, although his mother told him to come straight home; at last he takes his way home; on the way his aunt meets him and asks him to get some change for her at a shop. When he reaches home and his mother is going to punish him he says, "Aunt met me and I had to go on an errand for her." As he has never told an untruth his mother believes him, and he is pleased to think he has found so simple a means of getting out of a scolding. In this case there was some truth in what he said. The next time there may be hardly any, and after that none at all; when he says, for example, that he had to help the teacher tidy the cupboard. Perhaps he might stop his bad habit if we were to show him the picture of the Lilliputians and Gulliver.

It is very much the same with drunkenness. A man does not become a drunkard suddenly. Little by little the habit of drinking grows on him, and all at once he finds to his horror that he has become a slave and that the craving for drink has grown stronger than his self-control. There was once a German poet who took to drink during a long imprisonment, and afterwards when he wished to be free from his habit he found that it was stronger than his wish, and he wrote a little poem describing the horror of being enslaved by drinking habits.

Perhaps you will say to me, "Why do you tell us all this? We are not in danger of becoming drunkards." How do you know that? The dwarfs do not begin their work when you are awake and alert. On the contrary. They know that it is in childhood that we are most easily overcome. People who have become drunkards in later life have been generally those whose childhood knew no self-control. Their tongues were uncontrolled, and they followed all their inclinations. The sense of taste forges the first links of the chain that is later to make a prisoner of your free will. The sugar-basin is very often the beginning of the enslavement. Therefore be alert against the first hints. When you find you are giving in to the temptation to pick at a cake or to run to the sweet shop, say to yourself, "Ah! the Lilliputians!" Remember that the stomach is trying to rule you, and you have to conquer it. When you have done this several times you will begin to feel a glorious sense of power.

The Lilliputians use many other small opportunities to enslave us. Sometimes it is the tobacco habit. It will begin with one to two cigars a day, and gradually increase till one fine day, when good taste or consideration for others tells you you are annoying them, or you find you are ruining your own health, you will find also you are enslaved and the passion for smoking has become too strong for you to conquer.

Boys have other temptations. There is the mania for collection. Sometimes it is stamps and picture postcards.



This mania so enslaves the boys that they forget their work, and even sometimes sell their books in order to buy stamps. They pore continually over their treasures like a miser over his money-bags, and seem to have no thoughts for anything else. They were made prisoners while they slept. An alert and watchful person would never allow a craving to make a slave of him.

#### CONTROL OF HUNGER AND THIRST

THERE were once some boys at a boarding school who got up a competition to see who would do the most disagreeable things. They ate beetles, bit caterpillars in two, and swallowed flies. The boy that did the most distasteful thing was accounted the greatest hero of all. Now I do not want you to follow their example, for there are plenty of disagreeable things one can do besides these. Power of will is also sometimes to be shown by not doing something. For instance, you can leave the best piece of cake for your sister or even let it pass by you untouched.

The Indians had a superstition that bad spirits sometimes entered into men through their food, and therefore it was bad to eat too much. A very good meaning can be found in this superstition when we remember that greed and excessive love of good things to eat may awaken a bad spirit in man and make him the willing servant of his own appetites. So you see even the

dining-room may be a splendid practice ground for self-control.

#### CONTROL OF SLEEPINESS

I EXPECT you have heard of the great danger which threatens travellers in the snow. They are sometimes suddenly overcome by a terrible drowsiness which makes them forget all danger and become indifferent to death itself. To lie down and sleep is all they wish. To give way to this feeling means certain death, unless, indeed, a St. Bernard dog finds them in the snow.

This reminds me of the terrible danger of laziness and indolence which attacks people wherever they may be. Indolence often causes more trouble, more unhappiness, and brings greater ruin than active wickedness. It is true it does not cause a sudden and quiet death as sleeping in the snow does. It only brings a slow and certain death to all a man's better qualities; it mars all his actions with failure and robs him of all the trust and confidence of others, because nothing he does is well done. Indolence vanquishes him and proves itself stronger than his wishes and good intentions. How many important things a lazy person neglects, how many opportunities he loses, how much sorrow and trouble he causes himself and others! If he could look only into the future and see the irreparable unhappiness that his indolence would cause, he would start from his sloth in terror, like the sleeping sentry called by his general.

What must we do against this creeping foe? Exercise the will. Nothing more and nothing less. Issue a declaration of war, so that the will may master its rightful kingdom before it is too late.

One very good exercise is to get up punctually every morning at a fixed time, in spite of comfortable mattresses and pillows; to dress without stretching and yawning; to sit up straight like a soldier at table even when you do feel inclined to lounge; to step out bravely at the end of an excursion when you would like to slouch and drag. These are victories of the will over the body which strengthen the whole character. Here is another exercise. When mother asks you to go on an errand for her do not make a fuss about it.

I once knew a gentleman who had a horse that could hardly be held in on a homeward journey, it was so eager to reach the stable. On arriving at the stable door the gentleman would deliberately force the horse to go up and down the road two or three times before entering his stall. We should try and force our lazy limbs to go through such discipline sometimes.

#### CONTROL OF ANGER

CÆSAR found a good cure for fits of anger. When he felt himself growing angry he would count twenty before speaking. After a time the pause became such a habit that he made it without counting at all. Something of the sort takes place in playing the piano. When you

are learning you have to count the time in every bar, but after long practice you *feel* the correct time of a piece without counting every note. Cæsar found this device prevented his anger from leading him into unconsidered speech.

There is a still better cure, and that is to think about the people who annoy us so much with their irritable and irritating ways and try to find out how it is they have become so disagreeable. They may have had many troubles and misfortunes in their lives. It is, perhaps, too much to ask you to love your enemies at the first attempt, but as a first step in this direction you can at least think about the people who anger you and wish you evil. Try and look at things from their point of view, call to mind their good qualities, and you will feel less disturbed by their faults when you are calm, and perhaps you may even then come to love them, just as the blue sky is reflected in the lake when the waves are still.

#### A SHOT FOR NOTHING

"A SHOT for nothing if you hit the bull's-eye," cried the man at the shooting gallery at the fair. The people crowded round to try their luck, but the bull's-eye was cunningly fastened to the wings of a pigeon, which swayed to and fro, so that it was seldom hit. There was, however, one good shot who hit the bull's-eye every time for a whole hour, and only paid a penny

because every hit gave him another free. The owner of these shooting-galleries would not like to have many such customers.

Do you know what is the reward of a good act, or of self-control? You may find the first effort at self-control very hard, but then discover that the second attempt is easier. You have to pay heavily for the first shot, but you get the second free, as it were. Thus any one of you who makes a great effort to give away some fruit which you would like to eat yourself has not only the reward of an approving conscience, but has also gained the power of making another act of self-sacrifice next time with less effort. Not only is it easier to do a similar act next time, but it is easier to make any other effort at self-control, just as the man at the shooting-gallery does not only allow a free shot at the pigeon, but also at any other mark, without further payment.

If you force yourself to get up early in the morning, you will find it easier to do any other hard task. If you discipline yourself to forgive your sister quickly, or to ask her forgiveness when you have hurt her, you get a shot free. That is, you will find it easier to do other hard tasks, and so on.

Do you not know the story of Brutus and his wife Portia? When he conspired with other Romans to kill Cæsar, and she saw from his manner that he had something on his mind, it wounded her that he had not confided it to her. She knew he had said nothing to

her because he was afraid that his secret would not be safe with a woman, so she wounded herself with a knife to prove to her husband that she had enough self-control to rule herself, and could therefore keep a secret. She asked for his full confidence and said:

“ Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose them:  
I have made strong proof of my constancy,  
Giving myself this voluntary wound  
Here in the thigh: can I bear that with patience  
And not my husband's secrets? ”

Then Brutus hesitated no longer, for he knew that one act of self-control makes another possible.

Therefore when we speak of the reward of good actions, let us never forget that the greatest reward is the strength gained through one good action to go on and do better. We exercise no patience, love, or sacrifice in vain, even if we get no thanks, because the strength thus gained is reward enough in itself.

## CHAPTER III

### HABITS





## CHAPTER III

### HABITS

#### THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HABITS

HAVE you ever gone over a large ship and seen the arrangements made for the division of labour. If it is a sailing vessel, every mast, every sail even, is under the particular care of some particular sailor, whose duty it is to do all the work connected with it. If the ship is a steamer, then there are men in charge of the different parts of the machinery, from the engineer to the stoker. Different men are entrusted with the management of some particular part of the whole. Imagine the confusion that would arise if the captain gave the signal to put off, and the crew stood in groups not knowing what was expected of them, or if all of them rushed to do the same things. Imagine the state of things that would ensue if the captain had to run from one to the other showing them how to do the work, and then going after them to see if everything had been properly done! Probably the ship would run aground before it was out of harbour, for the captain is supposed to stay on the bridge and watch the course, only occasionally going over the ship to see if the men are doing their duty in every particular.

Think of the work there would be for a factory owner to do if he had to inspect every machine and see if it was running properly; or if he had to read every letter that went out of the office! He would soon be bankrupt, for he would have no time left to consider the more important questions, such as the most favourable market for selling his goods, and for buying the best raw material, or what inventions he could utilise. No; he must rely on the heads of the various departments or he might just as well cease business. He must be relieved from the worry of every detail, and must be free to keep his eye on the markets of the world and make his calculations. This is called division of labour.

You will agree with me that the more conscientiously the various deputies fulfil their duties the less time the employer will need to devote to over-looking them. He will then be in a position to give all his energies to making plans. He must be able to visit his customers who live in foreign countries and to inspect foreign markets in full confidence that everything at home will continue to flourish till his return.

Think how slowly all work would go forward if every workman had continually to ask, "What shall I do now?" The wheels of the machines would always be stopping. No; the employer must arrange that his workmen do not need supervision in every detail. The different duties and labours of the workmen must have become habitual. They must have become habits almost.

Habits are activities which do not need the conscious co-operation of the reason. Of course the reasoning powers should have been used for the acquiring of these habits, and seeing whether they work for the good of the whole, and also afterwards for occasional reflection and inspection to see if all is going well; but there is no need for supervision all the time.

Take piano-playing, for example. How carefully we look at the notes when we are learning, and with what trouble we get the correct fingering. But by continual practice it becomes automatic to touch the right keys. The eye sees the notes, and the nerves which move the muscles of the fingers have so often been used that without the conscious exercise of the brain the nerve centres which control the movements of the fingers are excited, and the action takes place. Then, as the brain has no longer any need to consciously control every single movement, it has time and energy to consider the expression—where to play loudly and where softly. So there is division of labour in learning to play the piano, just as there is in sailing a ship or managing a factory.

The aim of learning things and practising them is to form habits, and their use lies in freeing the mind for more important work, such as the considering the tendency of a whole course of actions and whether the ways are fitted to the end. The brain is like the captain who keeps watch from the bridge in order to be able properly to command the engineer or the crew.

When we speak of good habits and the importance of forming them we mean that every one should so strengthen his character by acquiring a staff of good, trustworthy habits, that he may spare the brain the trouble of attending to every small detail of his life with conscious effort. Otherwise all our actions would be hindered, and the whole of our life would suffer if Captain Brain were not always on the bridge. For instance, if tidiness has become a real habit, so that you put things in their places without thinking about it, you have given your brain time to think about other things; if you have made a habit of proper behaviour at table then you need not be anxious when you are dining with strangers lest you should forget how to behave, but will be able to pay attention to the conversation. If you accustom yourself to do things at a certain time then the mind is relieved from the strain of trying to remember little things. To put it shortly, if you do not free your mind from anxiety over little things, and do not depute the care of them to a few good and reliable habits, you are a bad manager of your life and will never prosper.

We acquire a habit through repeating an action until it becomes, as it were, independent and no longer needs the conscious co-operation of the brain. The horses at a fire station move forward by themselves towards the engine when they hear the bell ring. The nerve centres of the brain respond in the same way to stimulus from without after many repetitions of it. We might describe

the formation of a habit by saying that the message travels along the best worn road. If you have hung your hat on the stand when you enter the hall for a hundred times, you will do it in the midst of the most absorbing conversation, because you need no longer reflect. When your eye sees the hall the news travels in the well-worn track to your brain and without hindrance straight to the nerves controlling the movements of hanging up the hat.

Sometimes, of course, habits become a disadvantage and may, indeed, sometimes be dangerous, for bad and harmful actions may become habits. Then the supremacy of the reason is threatened.

The occurrence of such actions many times without the control of the mind makes the nerves of conscious control somewhat out of order, while the channel of yielding to the temptation is well worn and the action is not easily stopped by the reason. This is what happens when a bad action becomes a habit. The brain loses its control, and only regains it by great exertions, by a constant watchfulness, and by overcoming the temptation through the influence of other thoughts.

So you see how important it is for the mind to reflect and examine actions with regard to their value before allowing them to become independent. The captain of a ship has from time to time to give an eye to his crew and see if there may not be unruly members who may stir up mutiny. In the same way, your reason must examine your habits and decide which are good and

which are bad and likely to endanger the whole character.

The reason need not only concern itself with the supervision of bad habits, but also with good ones. It is dangerous to become so fixed in your good habits that you believe none can find fault with you. It is possible to become the slave of good habits. Have you not known people who get quite disagreeable if they have to take a book from its accustomed place, or are obliged to interrupt the ordinary course of their work? Is not the slave of economy in danger of becoming a miser?

Therefore we must keep a watch over our good habits and allow an exception to our rule when our reason tells us it is good or needful.

The very best habit is dangerous when it ceases to obey the reason, for the reason alone can judge what is necessary for the good of the whole character of the person concerned. Habits must be subordinated and act as the servants of the mind, in the same way as the engineer obeys when the captains signals "Stop."

#### EVERYTHING COMES TO LIGHT

THERE is a saying that "Everything comes to light." Is that really true? Are there not many crimes and evil deeds which never see the light of day? Are there not falsehoods told to teachers and parents which are

never discovered, or duties neglected which are never noticed? Do teachers and parents know everything, so that nothing children do escapes them? You know, all of you, that this is not the case. Many things are never found out, many falsehoods, many deceptions, many neglected duties, remain unobserved and unpunished. But do you really think that they *never* come to light in any sense? Some children when they have told a lie might say to themselves, "This time I have escaped: this time nothing has happened and no one will notice anything." This is a great mistake. It is true that a particular lie may not be discovered or punished, but can it be said "not to count?" No, it does "count." A lie that is once uttered can never be wiped out. For the expression of our eyes, indeed, our whole manner, will betray our deceitfulness and secrecy; every lie we tell changes our character: and do you think it true that a person's face will show whether he is a windbag or is trustworthy? I dare say you have heard of character-reading from handwriting. This is based on the fact that a man betrays his character not only in his acts and speech, but in a thousand little ways of which he himself is quite unconscious. For instance, by the way he writes, eats, treats humbler people, how he gets in and out of a tram. A friend once declared to me that he could tell from the handwriting whether a letter contained a falsehood or not. The lying sentence was written in a weaker or more characterless hand, because at that moment

the writer was not supported by the power and consciousness of truth.

If a lie can be seen from handwriting, you may be sure it shows itself still more clearly in the eyes, which have been called the mirrors of the soul. I do not say that every one can at once read in another's countenance whether he is untruthful or not. I cannot always say definitely what is displeasing in a person's face, yet I know something prevents me from having perfect confidence in him. It is probably because he has not a frank expression in his eyes, or because his whole manner has something deceitful about it.

A single lie can often bring a wavering expression into a face and shake the confidence of an observer. You can see then how short-sighted it is to think a lie does not come to light, or does not have any effect because it is not publicly discovered. On the contrary, when it is not discovered an uneasy conscience writes it in the expression.

When a person confesses his falsehood he feels free, and his look regains its confidence.

Then again a lie does not only "come to light" through the face. When you tell one lie you find a second easier: you will then begin to exaggerate your stories, and be inexact in all your speech, and though you do not realise it yourself, others will soon notice that you do not tell the truth, and your reputation will begin to be a bad one.

Do not think then that a lie will remain hidden. It



will out in a hundred ways. All your habits will announce it, and inform friend and foe alike that you are not to be trusted.

Other habits come to light in the same way. I once knew a lame professor. He lived alone with his servant, who drove him every day to the university. Some one once reproached the professor with his want of knowledge of people. He replied, "Oh, I know them better than you all. I watch them when they are least on their guard—getting on the trams. There the refined are easily distinguished from the rude and rough, the cads from the gentlemen. You can see whose manners are only a thin veneer on the surface. When they think they are unobserved, or when they are in a hurry, their selfishness and rudeness come to light."

He was quite right. There are also many people who think it does not matter how they behave at home with those who know them: with strangers they restrain themselves; at home they may rest from their efforts to be polite. As if it were possible to disguise character!

It will quickly be seen what a man's character really is. In an unguarded moment, a word, a phrase, will escape him which at once betrays his want of culture.

#### COURAGE AND SINCERITY

I HAVE heard people say that if there were to be no war in the world then we should all become cowards. There would be no more opportunity for showing the

virtues of courage and strength. Is this true? If it were true, then all women would be cowards, for, with the exception of the Amazons, they have never gone through the school of bloodshed on the battlefield. But who would dare to maintain that women are not brave? That they dare not put their lives at stake? That they dare not look death in the face, or that they cannot bear pain? Think of all the women martyrs, think of the sisters of charity, and of every mother who battles through life for her children. On the battlefield of Metz between the graves of the soldiers is the grave of an English girl, a nurse, who offered her services in the hospital when the smallpox was raging, and when many a man had drawn back. When we think of women, we know that courage and strength are to be met with in many places beside the battlefield. Yes, who can say that war does not perhaps prevent the development of the highest kind of courage and heroism—the courage which springs from love. Courage is really nothing but a frame of mind in which the thought of discomfort, pain, and death has no power over our actions. Is then death through powder or shot the worst of deaths or dangers? Or are there not innumerable other dangers which threaten the health, happiness, and life of men and demand as much, and often more, courage to face? Is not self-sacrifice as possible in saving men as in killing them? Is not love just as great a source of courage as war? Would there not be more courage in the world if there were more

love, and is not war itself that which prevents the existence of more of the enduring and noblest kind of courage, just because war kills love?

There is also one other point. I do not think that fearlessness towards bodily pain is necessarily a proof of true courage. There are many people who have strong nerves and not much imagination, and who are therefore somewhat indifferent to physical dangers—like most primitive people. Besides, in war, men are intoxicated by the forward movement of great masses of men. Death to many people is not the most fearful thing of all. This is shown by the fact that many men kill themselves because they find there are many things in life far more fearful than death. Otherwise we would be forced to say that suicides are the bravest of people. Condemnation, ridicule, contempt, confession of a fault, are far worse to many people. Therefore I think that the greatest and surest proof of courage does not lie in contempt of death alone, but in conquering other fears and the fear of other people. Strict sincerity and truthfulness are evidence of the truest courage. So you see courage can be shown by every one even if he has never seen a gun barrel. There are daily opportunities for exhibiting and practising open confession and fearless truthfulness in the smallest things. It is far easier to throw away your life in a fit of enthusiasm than to remain firm against the daily temptation of yielding to fear of blame or trying to escape punishment. Then it is to be seen whether you can keep true to your

courageous resolution or whether you are like the ostrich who hides when he sees people coming to attack him.

The old Germans had a belief that those who fell in a battle were taken to Walhalla to live with the gods in eternal light. He who does not tell falsehoods and is prepared to face everything in order to remain faithful to the truth is already in Walhalla in one sense. For all good and brave people will honour him and stretch out the hand of fellowship to him. Their love and confidence will make this earth a heaven to him.

CHAPTER IV  
SELF-KNOWLEDGE



## CHAPTER IV

### SELF-KNOWLEDGE

#### THE GRECIAN TEMPLE

You have, perhaps, heard of the famous Temple of Apollo at Delphi, where the prophetess sat shrouded in clouds of vapour and foretold the future. This temple bore the inscription, "Know thyself." These words expressed the first and most precious counsel the oracle had to give to those who questioned it about the future.

It may be, you think to yourself, that many much more important things might have been written over the portico of the temple. For instance, "Love thy neighbour," or "Govern thyself." Why did the oracle consider self-knowledge the first and most important duty? Well, surely, because it is not possible to really love your neighbour or govern yourself if you have no knowledge of yourself. If you do not know that you are a tale-bearer, or bad-tempered, or greedy, how would it ever occur to you to curb your tongue or control your actions? You might think there was no need of improvement in you, that you were a splendid fellow. You heard your aunt say so the other day, let us suppose, and so you rest content with that,

although you know quite well your aunt is not aware of much you sometimes do.

We call those people who have little self-knowledge conceited. They are like stopped clocks; for thinking themselves perfect and not knowing their faults they cannot go on improving, so just stay where they are and remain undeveloped.

Have you ever heard a man with a voice like a boy? Have you noticed how strange it sounds? But it is just as curious, and also very sad, when the body alone grows, while the inner man, his thought, his feeling, and his will, remains weak, childish, and undeveloped. Have you never seen a bearded man who is really a raw youth in all but appearance? Such effects come from want of self-knowledge. Only he who properly knows himself can properly control himself. Just as an engineer can control his engine properly only when he knows how much heat the boiler can bear, what parts need oiling most, and all about the strength and construction of the machine. It is just the same with "loving your neighbour." It is not possible without self-knowledge. Suppose you had quarrelled with your brother. The cause may really have been a roughness or irritating tone of your voice. You, however, were, we will suppose, quite unconscious of this, and laid the blame on the brother. And by this injustice you may have wounded his most sensitive feelings so that he becomes really angry. Yet you love him as he loves you, and wish that a more friendly tone



should rule your life together, but for want of proper self-examination the strife continues in the same old unfriendly way.

There are many unhappy people in the world who become embittered and withdraw into themselves, because others avoid them and do not ask for their participation in joy or sorrow. Now if these people had only made a voyage of discovery into their own minds and characters they would have found certain hateful and repulsive qualities which accounted for the loneliness in which they find themselves.

We can now begin to see the deep wisdom in the saying, "Know thyself," which was written over the temple where men went to hear prophecies of the future. For the man who has sincerely examined himself carries, to a great extent, his future in his own hands. He can recognise his faults and failings and try to alter them before it is too late. But as the blind can never learn to see, so these poor conceited ones always seek the cause of their misfortunes in the faults of others.

Let us imagine a factory owner making benevolent plans and arrangements for the comfort of his work-people, and then complaining of their ingratitude. Of course, there are ungrateful people to be found in every class, but I wonder if this man had asked himself whether it might not be his own fault that his kindness was not appreciated? Had he been too condescending? Did he remember that to give well and kindly is a very difficult art?

Imagine the case of a business man who is unsuccessful. What he should first of all do is to look round and think, "Now, what mistake have I made? Have I been systematic, industrious, and polite to customers? Have I perhaps insufficient knowledge, or not the right qualities for this branch of business?" If he can honestly answer these questions satisfactorily, then he may soon have better fortune. But if he merely blames the "bad times" he will never be a successful man: to those that are without self-knowledge all times are bad.

CHAPTER V

DISCOVERIES



## CHAPTER V

### DISCOVERIES

#### WHY LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES?

WHEN you have been at the theatre you must often have noticed the little children about your own age who played the parts of the elves and fairies. They wear such gay and glittering dresses and dance about in floods of coloured light—now red, now blue, and then pure white. You all think what a glorious life that must be and wish to be one of them. Have your parents ever taken you behind the scenes? There you would see how tired and anxious many of the fairies look. If you followed them to their homes you would see how poor and often badly treated they are. Many of them have to help keep their fathers and mothers, and you would then realise how different their stage life is from their home life.

Some people just enjoy what is before their eyes and never trouble about what goes on behind the scenes. They only know the surface and appearance of things: nothing more. Kittens are blind for nine days after they are born, but many people are blind all their lives, or at least they can only see things that are quite close to them—they are spiritually short-sighted.

Have you ever heard the story of what the Queen Marie Antoinette said more than a hundred years ago when the people clamoured for bread before her palace windows and she was told, "The people have no bread." "Then why do they not eat cake?" she said. She was not making fun of them at all, only it was impossible for her to realise that people could be in want of food. She had lived in abundance and splendour all her life, and had never looked behind or beneath the scenes of gaiety. Because she did not know her people and their lives she treated them wrongly and helped to bring about her own tragic end.

If you do not see or know of an evil you cannot do away with it. It is much more important for us to see behind the scenes than to see only what is on the stage. Show and illusion attract us in front, while true and touching realities lie behind the scenes. No one should be surprised at the failure of his efforts and the impotency of his life if he has been content with knowing only the shows and appearance of life, for he has built on false calculations.

Let us take together a few excursions behind the scenes of life in order to help you to understand what I mean, and to guard you from becoming short-sighted.

#### THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

GOING along the streets you must have noticed large shops brilliantly lighted with electricity, where among

a multitude of other clothing, shirts of all descriptions are to be seen marked at very low prices.

You have been taught a great deal about the history of the earth and sun and moon, but have you ever heard the history of these shirts? Have you ever looked behind the scenes? What stories these shirts could tell us if they could only speak! Stories of pale seamstresses in narrow courts where scarcely a glimpse of the blue sky shows between the grimy houses; where the organ-grinder alone brings a faint echo of distant joy and poetry! They would tell us of weary nights, year in, year out, with only a little more hunger, or work still more pressing, to vary the monotony. Yes, all these things would make a chapter in the history of the shirt. But its saddest recollection would be the disappointed face of the seamstress as she pocketed the meagre pay that had taken her days and days to earn, and from which she had to find enough to pay for food and rent.

Many years ago one of our poets, Thomas Hood, trying to touch the hearts of the rich, described in a poem the life of such a seamstress. I will quote you a few verses:—

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat in unwomanly rags  
Plying her needle and thread.  
Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch  
She sang the Song of the Shirt.

Work! Work! Work!  
While the cock is crowing aloof!  
And work! Work! Work!  
Till the stars shine through the roof!  
It's Oh! to be a slave,  
Along with the barbarous Turk,  
Where woman has never a soul to save,  
If this is Christian work!

Work! Work! Work!  
In the dull December light,  
And work! Work! Work!  
When the weather is warm and bright—  
While underneath the eaves  
The brooding swallows cling,  
As if to show their sunny backs  
And twit me with the Spring

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread.  
Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch—  
Would that it's tone could reach the rich—  
She sang this Song of the Shirt.

Since this song was written great improvements have been made in the life of the workers, but the poor women who make shirts still go hungry more often than any others. Behind all those electric lights are so many miserable lives. If every one knew of them many things in the world would be altered. For the employers alone cannot alter them. Only when love fills the hearts of all, and all band themselves together, can there be light in the lives of those who sew and wash and labour for us.



That is worth more than thousands of electric lights in shop windows.

#### UNDER THE EARTH

HERE on the table lies a piece of coal—black, cold, and dead. Yet how deeply interesting is its history. Perhaps you may have heard the story of the city of Vineta which is supposed to lie at the bottom of the ocean. A poet has written of this city and says that even now the sound of church bells comes up from the ocean floor and magic lights shine through the waves and amaze the sailors in the ships on the surface of the sea.

This story is a mere legend, of course, but it is quite true that at the bottom of the sea lies a sunken world—a world of the remains of giant plants and prehistoric animals, buried many thousands of years ago by the action of floods, earthquakes, and like forces. Many curious things have been discovered about this sunken world. For instance, that pieces of amber are nothing but petrified gum from the ancient gigantic fir trees. This amber has sometimes small insects, such as spiders and flies, embedded in it. The greater part of these remains of animal and plant life has been discovered through various large excavations and mining operations. Great and strange events in the world's history have been revealed through the discovery of many curious imprints of plants and animals below the surface of the earth.

This sunken world is not, like the city of Vineta, merely an interesting but useless subject for wonder. We realise it to be much more than that when we find it to be the world's great storehouse of light and warmth. It is the remains of these giant forests of prehistoric times, transformed by enormous heat and pressure in the depths of the earth, that we bring to the surface as coal, and which we use to make our fires, to heat our ovens, to get gaslight, and a hundred other things.

Thus coal has a two-fold history, the first part being concerned with its disappearance from the upper world, its sinking, through the changes we spoke of on the earth's surface, and its pressure into coal. The second part deals with its return to the surface, its resurrection by human hands. The light and heat of the sun absorbed thousands of years ago it gives out to us for our needs to-day. We will now concern ourselves with this second part of its history.

We will speak of the miner who brings the coal up from the bowels of the earth. The occupation of the miner appears to us so hard and wearisome, so dreary and monotonous and remote from that of other men in the world above ground, that it is difficult to see how he finds any pleasure or happiness in life.

When in the winter evenings you pass through a great city and see the flood of light everywhere, and watch the hissing locomotives going in and out of the railway stations, the numerous factories with their smoking chimneys and whirring machinery, you will reflect that

all this roaring activity draws its life and being from the coal mines underground. And we may well wonder if any reward can be too great for those who with much toil and hardship bring for us this precious stuff to the light of day. And what are the facts? What does the miner actually get for his labour? Many such workers in some countries have not sufficient wages to allow them to keep themselves properly warmed, clothed, and fed in the cold winter days. Yet these are the men whose lives are passed in bringing the blessing of light and heat to us. Have you ever read how the miners work at their underground task? Confined in close and narrow alleys, sometimes they have to lie half naked in the stifling heat of the mine picking out the coal from the seams; now on their backs facing the low roof; now crouching in painfully awkward positions to loosen some large block. How close and exhausting the air becomes down there you can well imagine. I once read of a man who visited a coal mine and stayed down four hours. Listen to the description of his feelings when he returned to daylight. "I shot like an arrow up to the surface of the earth again in a massive basket. How I enjoyed the beauty of nature directly my eyes became accustomed to the blinding sunlight. I quite forgot I was black as the veriest miner, and I dawdled along happily through the lanes and fields. How soft the breezes felt and how sweet the trilling of the lark! How sweet the hay! How wonderfully picturesque the group of harvesters in the sunlight

working in the newly cut meadows." Such are the feelings of the visitor after being in the mine for only four hours. It seemed to him that he had escaped from hell. The miners have to stay there the whole day long and often remain at this work of mining all their lives.

In thinking about coal and how we get it you must not imagine that our highest aim has been reached when, from the dark recesses of the earth, the primitive forests have been used to give us light and heat. As long as human lives are sacrificed and souls are crushed in doing such work the human spirit has not achieved its highest task or triumph. When such toilers in the darkness are doubly rewarded by free time in sun and light, and are in a position to have comfortable homes, and allowed some share in the beauty and knowledge diffused among men, then only will man have become king of the earth. An old verse asks—

“ Where were thy ring and thy crown, O Queen,  
Did the miner not delve in the earth unseen? ”

Never forget that our thanks for the beautiful and useful things we enjoy are not due alone to the artist and inventor, but also to the self-sacrificing work of the simple labourer. Only if we bear this in mind can the beauty and comfort be a blessing to us.

## THE TEACHER

AT our school lived a master and his family. In the recreation hour, when the five hundred school children thronged past his door, some would love to pound on it, or push one another against it. It was also a huge delight to them to see him bounce out like a Jack-in-the-Box without being able to find the culprit who had mingled in the crowd and passed on.

One day I asked the ringleader if the matter had been sifted to the bottom and the culprits discovered. "No," he said, "but I have discovered something." "What do you mean?" I said. "Lately when the master rushed out in a rage I saw his wife leaning against the door with her little children, all with such sad faces. Then I understood why our teasing always made him so very angry. It was not only because it disturbed him, but because he was ashamed that his wife and children should be disturbed and should see what liberties we took with him. So I said to the others, 'Boys, it's mean! Don't let us do it. He hates his family to see us tease him.'"

That is what the boy said and I have never forgotten it, for it showed that he had looked behind the scenes, and that had cured him.

Most of the roughness and unkindness in the world is caused by want of thought and imagination, and not

from badness of heart. Boys would not anger the teacher if there was a discoverer in the class who understood how to go behind the scenes and report the real state of things.

#### POOR MARY

I WILL tell you a Russian story I once read.

A French merchant on his travels came to a Russian village. He met there a poor girl whom he promised to marry, if she would go away with him. She allowed herself to be deceived and went away secretly. But on the way he left her and travelled on alone.

She had then to beg her way home, and after long journeying she arrived at the village hungry and ragged. But her mother treated her as if she were very wicked, and made her sleep at night in thin clothes on the hard floor and never spoke a kind word to her. Then the mother fell ill and in few days was laid in her coffin. At the funeral service in the church the priest said before the congregation, "Sorrow over such a daughter has killed her."

Then the people in the village avoided and despised the poor girl more than before. No one would give her work. When the children saw her they threw stones and called after her. At last a shepherd allowed her to help him in his hut, and gave her some of his food, but she was very ill and could only move about slowly.

It was a dreadful sight to see her running from the children when they called after her directly she showed herself.

A gentleman who lived near the village observed this. He was deeply sorry for the poor girl and resolved to help her. One day when the children were again throwing stones at her and calling her names he stood in their path and said, "Children, come here and I will tell you a story," and he took them behind the scenes. He told them how unhappy Mary was, how dreadfully she was atoning for her thoughtless action, how meanly and despicably the stranger had behaved to her, and how now she was dying. The children listened with open mouths, for they had never heard anything of all this. They had only heard how bad and wicked Mary was. From this time they changed. They had been behind the scenes. The boys said good morning to her and took her food. The girls came and said, "We do love you, Mary."

So kind and loving were all the children that the poor girl was quite happy and could not understand what had happened. When she died four weeks later her face had no more a hopeless, hunted look, but as she lay on her poor bed her expression was peaceful and happy, and in her hands were the last flowers the little girls had brought her.

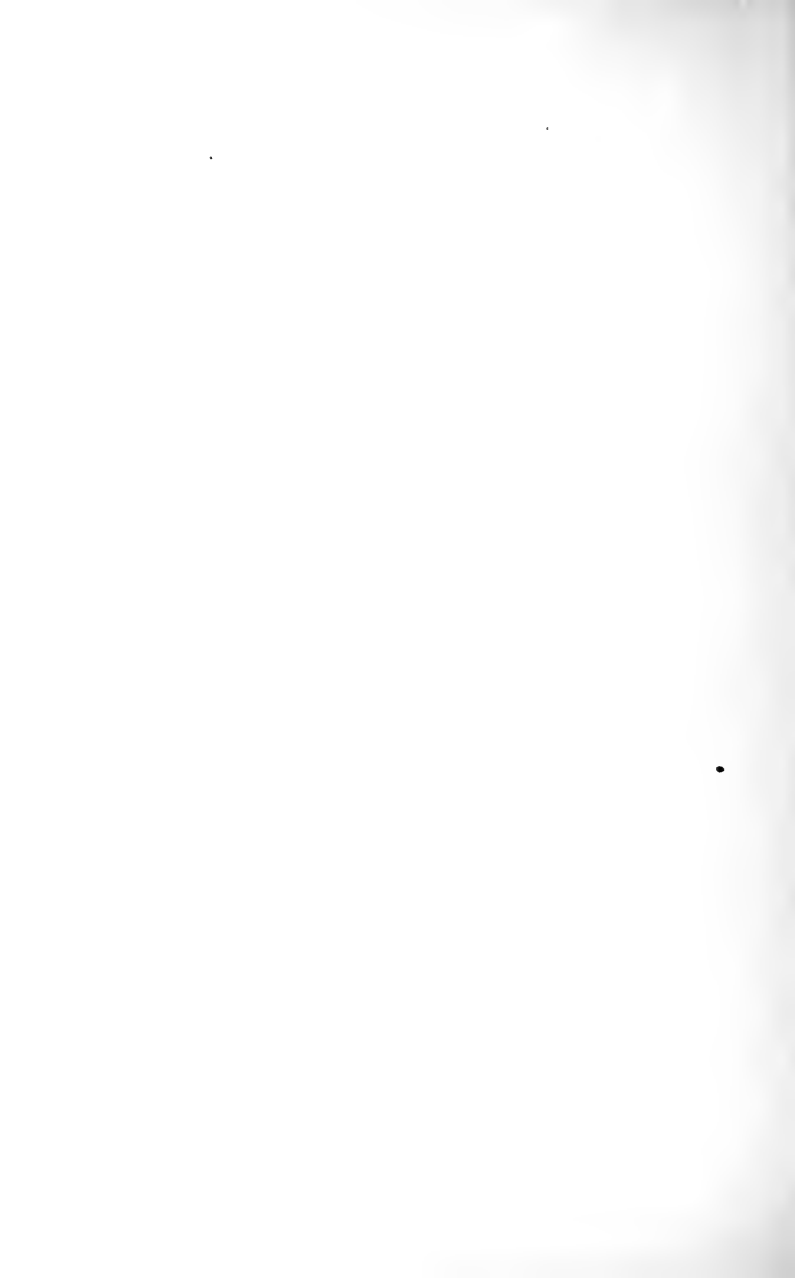
Many a hopeless, hunted man would die in peace if only a saviour came in time and freed the persecutors from their blindness, and filled their hearts with

sympathy, by telling his pitiful story of sorrow and misfortune.

Have you ever thoughtlessly laughed at people who wish no one ill and who are deserted and neglected by every one? Did you never fear to find they had suffered like poor Mary?



CHAPTER VI  
THE POWER OF LITTLE THINGS



## CHAPTER VI

### THE POWER OF LITTLE THINGS

#### THE DYING SAILORS

LONG ago in a great storm an English ship ran on some rocks near the Spanish coast and sank. There were only enough boats for the women and children, so most of the crew had to remain on the sinking ship with certain death before them. Now when those who were in the boats had rowed some distance from the ship they suddenly heard the sound of singing. They looked back and saw all the men standing on the fore deck singing, and recognised the air to be "God save the Queen." So those men went down heroically and tranquilly, not in confusion, with curses on their lips, but like men to whom death is nothing.

The people in the boats gazed speechless and agitated. They remembered this scene till the end of their lives, and whenever they acted in a mean or hateful manner they remembered the song of the brave men who went down, and said to themselves, "Was not their death more beautiful than our lives; would it not have been better if we too had sunk with that heroic band?"

What was it that was so great in the action of the brave men who were drowned? Surely, that they did not let the fear of death disturb them, but submitted to the inevitable with a noble calmness of spirit which

makes us say that it was not the raging elements that triumphed, but man. Man remained the conqueror.

I am sure you agree with me and admire the men who set such an example. But do you think that such action is only to be imitated when in a shipwreck without hope of rescue? Or do you not think that noble actions of noble people can be copied in daily life? These sailors show us how to do difficult and dangerous things in a noble manner. There is everywhere and always opportunity to do this. Let us take a very ordinary example. Illness! When you are ill you have a splendid opportunity for exercising the great power that man possesses, and raising yourself above the pains and deprivations and unpleasant things connected with sickness, and behaving nobly instead of continually murmuring and showing a peevish irritation.

What cannot be altered must be borne, not with gloom and stubbornness, but with patience and cheerfulness, so that every one who tends you may remember with pleasure how well you bore it all.

Suppose you have to do some disagreeable task for your mother. Instead of going for a walk with the others, you have to take care of one of your little brothers or sisters, or to do some little household task. I know you will remember the sort of things I mean, little things, which are surely not as bad as a shipwreck on the Spanish coast. But if you have really understood the example of the dying sailors, and wish to imitate them, you can make their example a light to guide you in the

little troubles and difficulties of daily life. For the life of most people is made up of little difficulties and disappointments and not of great shipwrecks. A noble life can be made up of small things, and the beautiful example which you have given in a thousand small ways will begin to have as great an influence and be as shining an example as a single heroic act. People will then look on your life in the same way as they do on the noble death of the sailors on the sinking ship, whose song of courage rang out across the wild waters.

#### IN THE CHURCHYARD

You must have many times seen the graves of famous men and women. They are often covered with flowers, and trees and shrubs are planted round them. Great numbers of people visit these graves to do reverence to the memory of great and noble lives. On the anniversaries of their deaths services are sometimes held and speeches about them are made, and thus their memory is kept fresh in living hearts. And rightly so, for their example is as the light of stars in the darkness of night, and many despondent souls gather new strength by remembering how these great ones withstood the blows of fate.

Beside the monuments of famous people you may often see the quiet graves of simple, humble folk. Some of these may also be covered with flowers put there by those that loved them, but other graves may be very

old and neglected and with weather-worn stones overgrown with grass, graves no one comes to tend and care for.

I often reflect how much, how very much, we may possibly owe to those whose graves are no longer tended and visited.

Here lies, let us imagine, a gentle woman who died many years ago; quite a humble woman, who suffered much, worked and cared for others all her life, generously forgave all those who had done her wrong, and died at last a peaceful death. Do you think that now, just because her grave is lonely and neglected, her influence does not live in some human heart? Yes, she lives on though no one knows her name. When you master your scorn and anger and cherish a nobler thought, or when a wave of pity swells your heart, you may be sure it arises from the great treasury of love which is continually being added to by humble people, who when living were often ignored and thrust aside. But after their death even some of the roughest and most unkind people have felt their loss and longed for their loving presence again. They are like an invisible choir, whose melody sounds softly through the world, often unheard when men are immersed in business, deafened by passion, or sunk in heedless indifference, but which in quiet hours inspires men to higher things.

It is true that there are many people who act wrongly and selfishly, but there are none who do not lend their ears to this choir. To-day you may lie quietly in your

bed without fear lest your mother may be taken away and tortured for a witch like many innocent people in the middle ages. And you may be very sure that you owe this security, not only to all the great-hearted men who fought this wicked custom publicly, but also to all the thousands of men and women whose little words of pity and deeds of kindness done in all humility penetrated into all the dark corners of the minds around them, and gradually by their accumulated strength banished at length this dreadful darkness of ignorance and superstition.

If to-day a man remains honourable and true in great temptations and serves truth instead of falsehood, he owes it not alone to the great champions of truth and honour, but also to the simple, honest people, true in word and honest in deed, who often sat hungry in their cold rooms and laboured industriously at wretchedly hopeless tasks. Many of our good customs and our enlightenment are due to people of past times of sterling character, trustworthy as the pole star is steadfast, and a sure support to all their weaker neighbours. After their death their pictures may have hung on the walls for fifty, sixty, or a hundred years, looking down with serious penetrating gravity on their children and grandchildren, full of the charm of perfect uprightness. Yet now, though no book, no cross, no flowers, remind the living of their existence, they are inspirers and educators, for the example of their faithful lives is ineradicable and indestructible, and their influence is with us still.





CHAPTER VII

HUMAN SOCIETY



## CHAPTER VII

### HUMAN SOCIETY

#### THE BREAKFAST TABLE

CHILDREN, have you any idea how many people may have been at work to provide breakfast for us? You would have to go into many lands if you wished to thank them or to shake hands with them.

First of all there is the coffee. Where does that come from? Most of it from Brazil, or perhaps some from Java or Arabia. Think how many hands it has to pass through before it is on the table ready for us to drink. It has to be picked, brought across the sea, roasted, and ground before it reaches the coffee pot and is brought steaming to table.

The corn of which your bread is made may have grown on the plains of Russia or America. It has been garnered and threshed by people whose language you cannot understand. Then it is taken to be ground into flour, and finally goes to the baker who makes it into bread or rolls for breakfast. When you are still in your warm bed the baker boy comes and delivers it at your door.

Now we come to sugar. You know something of how sugar is prepared, and of the many hands through which it passes. Butter and milk have given work to many people before they come to table.

If I were to go on and ask who made our chairs and tables, cups and saucers, and ask how many hands had hammered and sawed, and worked to make your house, and how many brains had planned and thought about it, you would in imagination have an enormous crowd round your breakfast table. And if all those who invented and improved machines and helped to make our lives so easy and comfortable were to come to life there would be no room for them on the earth. This all arises in our minds when we consider the breakfast table alone. I dare not begin to think of all those who have been and are concerned with the preparation of our food and clothing.

I wonder if you have sometimes thought of this when you have been eating your breakfast, or whether you have merely thought of the taste of it? It is good for us to think of these things sometimes. Thankless acceptance of even our breakfast is more dangerous than gobbling it. It is dangerous for our characters to become accustomed to accepting everything as a matter of course, and never thinking of the people on whom we are so dependent. We would fall into the danger of forgetting that the comfort and happiness and safety of our lives are the gifts of the labour of thousands of minds and hands. Any one who forgets this, or who never realises it, is in danger of behaving as if he depends on himself alone and will treat others in a manner which will destroy for them any satisfaction or pleasure they may have in working for him. He will tear with rough

hands the delicate web of service and counter-service. He will be apt to show the same ungratefulness and regardlessness in other relationships. He will grow careless and accept the kindness and help of friends and neighbours and relations as if it were his due. He is thus behaving like a person without a mind; he will take everything without reflecting how bound we are each to the other, and how dependent one upon another. The structure of society depends on co-operation and fellowship, and thankfulness is the cement which holds all together. When cracks appear, and creakings and groanings are heard in the social building, it means that there is a lack of gratitude or consideration somewhere.

Therefore let us sanctify our breakfast by our gratitude. Think, for instance, of the milk-boy who has to get up so early to bring you your milk. You may be sure that this habit of thoughtfulness will be a blessing to you through life. For your thoughts will then travel over as large a field of life as possible, and will not be confined to one corner.

Some people are accustomed to ask Christ to bless what they eat. It is a beautiful custom, but Christ would only bless your meal when you think gratefully of the fellow-creatures who have prepared it for you.

If we understand the value of work and regard it as a service of mankind we can never be arrogant or thoughtless when we deal with workmen. We shall feel much respect for the simplest artisan, for his work is just as important to the whole as the calculations of a leader.

We shall make way for a workman as much as for another, and not expect him to step out of our way; we shall stand up and give up our seat for a working woman as much as for a lady. We shall not make workmen wait in cold passages, but allow them to sit down when they are waiting to see us. We shall try and behave always in a way that is worthy of thinking, feeling people, and not like the horses who accept their oats and harness with the same placidity.

The life of the thoughtful is happy and blessed, for gratefulness brings happiness and peace.

#### OUR SPIRITUAL DEBTORS

WE have lately talked about the people who work to secure our physical well-being. How is it then with our intellectual advantages, with our knowledge, with our works of art, poetry—in short, with all that enriches our minds, forms our characters, and quickens our feelings? Have we only ourselves to thank for this, or merely the people of our own country?

Let us begin with the Bible. Were Moses or the prophets and apostles English, German, or Swiss? Were not the founders of the Christian Church chiefly Romans and Greeks? And were not the Irish monks the first to bring Christianity to the Britons, the Germans, and the Swiss? Did they not then wander out from their monasteries into the forests and over the country spreading culture in their train?

Then again, take the origin of our sciences—medicine, chemistry, and natural sciences—who knows the people and can tell the names of all who have contributed to these? In that most ancient of sciences, astronomy alone, how many have toiled? Chinese, Assyrians Egyptians, Greeks. Everything we know has been gained by the united thought and observation of all the civilised people of the world. One learns from the other. In the discovery of an important planet, or in the calculations concerning its course, many observatories in different countries co-operate. You have learnt that the earth moves round the sun and laugh pityingly at the idea of olden times that the sun moves round our little earth. But you must remember that many men puzzled their brains and anxiously compared observations on this subject. One of them was inspired by the thought that the earth moves round the sun, a thought which solves many difficulties. This was the ancient Greek Aristarchus. Men would not, of course, accept this teaching without further proof. Then there was another who tried to prove conclusively that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun and other celestial bodies moved round it. This was the Greek called Ptolemæus. Many centuries passed before men realised that the evidence did not prove this. At last a German, Copernicus, made great calculations proving that the earth moves round the sun. When he was dying he sent his calculations to the Pope. Many centuries passed again before his theory was

accepted. Indeed, at first, the people who spread the new truth too zealously among those who held the older belief were burnt or imprisoned.

So now you see that the truth which you learn in a few minutes has been gained at great cost, and has taken many years and centuries to discover. If all these nights of patient watching and research in the science of astronomy were counted there would be over a million Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, Greek, English and French, Scandinavian, German, and Italian nights. If these nights had not been spent in watching, not only would some important truths have remained hidden from us, but the desire for truth and the pleasure in conscientious work would not be so lively within us; all these qualities in us have been developed by such work and such patient watching.

Yes, think how much would have been lost to the world if people had always slept or whiled away the time in amusement.

But we do not live by science alone. Art is also an enrichment of our life. Any picture gallery will prove to you how indebted we are to people of all nations for our stock of beautiful things. It is the same with literature. All great poets of any nation owe a great part of the richness of their thought to the influences and genius of men of other countries than their own. Truly the blood of all mankind courses through our veins.



## OUR NATIVE LAND

You may have sometimes wondered why I have never spoken to you about love for father and mother. The reason is that I do not think there is any need to talk about it. There is no use in talking to one who has not that love in his heart. It is like talking to a stone. On the other hand, I think there is much that we may have to say as to how we should show the love that we bear them.

It is very much the same about love of one's own country. I cannot imagine a good man not loving his country. How can he help loving the people in whose language he has first heard the words of love and tenderness and with whom he has shared his joys and sorrows. A man is not only the child of his parents, but also the child of his country and its people and its history.

It is the most natural thing in the world that a man should love his own country, but it should not make him unjust to other countries. It does not come quite so natural to love other countries. And because justice and consideration for other countries do not come so easily to us we have to exercise a finer thoughtfulness and try to educate and widen our sympathies.

We spoke of thoughtfulness some time ago and of those short-sighted people who only acknowledge love and benefits which are offered them very directly and

never dream of the gratitude they owe to thousands of their fellow-creatures for much of the beauty and comfort of their own lives. We cannot expect them to feel a sense of gratitude if they are quite ignorant of their indebtedness.

What sometimes happens at Christmas will illustrate what I mean. You may receive a beautiful present, but do not know who is the giver of it. So, of course, you cannot thank him even if he stands quite close to you, trying, perhaps, to look unconcerned. But if the secret is betrayed then you throw your arms round him and thank him heartily.

Now in our last lesson we found the secret of the many thousands who enrich our lives with many mental and material gifts. But you cannot throw your arms around them, though you thank them in your heart. This knowledge will prevent you feeling contemptuous and hostile to other nations. It will prevent you from speaking as if your nation alone was great, and as if no others had helped it, or needed to be taken into consideration. Leave such thoughts to those whose eyes have not yet been opened. The more cultured a person is the more modest he is. He knows how little he has done and how much he owes to others. The greater and more civilised a nation is the less it will boast of its achievements.

CHAPTER VIII  
RESPONSIBILITY



## CHAPTER VIII

### RESPONSIBILITY

#### “ THAT IS NOT MY AFFAIR ”

“ THAT is not my affair ” is a saying we very often hear. Many people’s hearts are narrow and their sympathies only reach as far as their own garden fence. With others, love and justice are only extended to people of their own class, race, or colour. And should they be taken to task for this they are immensely surprised and entirely fail to understand why they should make their kind feelings universal and extend their good-will to distant fellow-creatures, whom perhaps they have never seen. “ What are they to do with us? ” or “ What do we owe to them? ”

Such small-hearted, narrow-minded people seem to me like those who cannot read. Of course, they can read actual books, but they do not seem able to read the meaning of life; I mean by that, they cannot understand it.

People of all lands and every country have contributed to produce every article used in daily life and every kind of food on our table.

You should make a little voyage of discovery round your room with an atlas in your hand. You will discover then that the different articles will lead you

into every land shown on the maps, and you will also find that there is hardly a single race of people who do not help to make our daily life more comfortable for us.

Think of the human lives that are bound up with every object. Think of the hard work and effort that are represented by these things, then you will begin to understand what artificial barriers are frontiers and city walls. Our distant fellowmen are not to be kept from us by such barriers. They have long ago overstepped them all. They have helped to build our houses and stock our gardens. Our very clothes have often been woven and sewn by them. Most of our food is prepared and sometimes even brought across the sea by these fellow-creatures of other nationalities.

Take a tiny match in your hand and let us see if we can find out how many people in how many different countries have helped to make it. The pine woods of Sweden gave the wood of the match; from the warm countries came the gum to paint the head of it; while the sulphur, which with the phosphorus makes the head so combustible, came from the Sicilian mines, and the phosphorus itself is kept by the chemist in the laboratory. If I tell you the sad story of the boys in the Sicilian sulphur mines, and how often they lose their health through this work, can you then light your lamps and raise your food to your mouth saying, "It is nothing to do with us?" No. Those boys are with you; you are enjoying a part of their lives. They are the inmates of your house and deserve that you should

have kindly feelings for them in your heart. It is true that it may not help them much directly, but by being thoughtful in this way you will not become indifferent. You may learn to become sympathetic and realise how all the people on the earth are bound up together, and your example may spread and the long reign of indifference to all except those immediately around us will gradually cease. So that the day will come when love for our fellow-creatures will have grown so strong and enlightened that no one will be able to enjoy anything that has been produced by others suffering misery and want.

Here is a story of London which will show you clearly how the furthest are often the nearest, and how we can bring ourselves into danger by leaving them thoughtlessly to their fate.

In the middle of the last century the quarters of the poor in the East End were separated widely from the dwellings of the rich in the West End, as indeed now. The people in the West End did not trouble themselves about the people in the East. It was as if an ocean lay between the two halves of the city. Suddenly a number of cases of infectious disease appeared in the West. After careful investigation it appeared that the illness had been carried to the West from the East by means of the clothes brought to the shops of the West from the workshops of the East. These tailoring shops were dens of misery and disease. Sometimes whole families lived, cooked, slept, and worked in one tiny

room. If a child was ill, the clothes that were being worked at were spread on the bed because there was nowhere else to put them.

So the misery of the East came West—simply because the East worked for the West. Then the eyes of the people in the West were opened to see how much the lives of those in the East really did concern them, and they began to realise that their own neglect of and hardness to their fellow-creatures were being avenged upon them.

Now, you will perhaps ask, Yes, but how can we show our love for our distant fellow-creatures? It is impossible for us to give our hearts and thoughts to each man who has had something to do with our daily lives in all quarters of the globe, or to really assist him. For instance, when we wear wool from Australia, or eat meat that has come from America or bread from corn grown in Russia, it would be impossible to inquire into the welfare of all the people who have worked to prepare these things. It would take so much time. We should be neglecting those near to us to whom we owe duty and affection. Certainly, but that is not what is meant.

What is meant is that in our grateful and kindly thoughts for all those who are dear to us, and to whom we wish well, we should include even the most distant fellow-creatures with whom we are connected, and whose mental and physical work makes up the warp and woof of our lives. We cannot help each one



personally. But our dealing with those that are bound to us and our influence finally upon our own country depend on whether we have wide sympathies and goodwill in our hearts for all men.

There would indeed be heaven on earth if all men spoke the language of good-will. Then the service of each, rendered to each and all, would be willing service. Good-will and gratitude would lead men to be faithful in word and deed. This ideal of fellowship and brotherhood would keep them from selfishness and brutality. And love for one's neighbour? Do you think it would be weakened by this love of a wider kind, by this thought for our fellow-men in all parts of the world? Far from it. The habit of kindly thought and gratitude for services rendered from those who are far away and never known personally to us only increases our power of gratitude to those whose lives actually touch our own.

People who accept the co-operation of the world's workers without a thought for the workers themselves will also overlook the service rendered by those near them.

Gratitude is the flower of the highest culture; a thoughtful, thankful man will try and understand the history of his mental and physical blessings, their origin and growth. This history is far more important to him than the dates of battles by land or sea.

## THE LITTLE SCREW

AN English poet tells the story of a tiny screw, which with thousands of other tiny screws held together two large steel plates in a huge iron-clad. In mid-ocean this little screw began to loosen and threaten to fall out altogether. The next little screw said, "If you fall out, then we shall fall out too." Then the nails in the body of the ship said, "This is too tight for us, we shall loosen ourselves a little." When the great iron ribs heard this they cried out, "Hold fast, for pity's sake. For if you do not hold, then we are done for." The rumour of the intention of the little screw spread like lightning through the body of the whole ship. It creaked and groaned in all its joints. Thereupon all the ribs, plates, and screws, and even the tiniest nails, agreed to send a petition to the little screw, begging it to hold fast or else the whole ship might break up and none of them reach home. It flattered the pride of the little screw to have so much importance attached to it, that it sent word that it would stay fast.

If you consider what we have been saying lately about responsibility you will see why I have told you the story of the little screw. The little screw imagined that it would matter to no one if it made itself a little more comfortable and took more room. But the thrill of terror that ran through the ship's whole body showed how the whole great iron-clad would be affected by the

screw's example. The little screw had a large responsibility and was of importance to the whole ship. Is it not really true that if one nail becomes loose then the others loosen? For one part holds another firm. If the ship had foundered perhaps the shipping company might have gone bankrupt, and through that many people have become ruined and poor.

It is just the same with human life. Of some business firms you hear it said that they are trustworthy and honest; of others that they are not reliable nor honest, and that they take bribes. How does a firm get such a reputation? It may begin in quite a small way. Perhaps one man takes a dishonest percentage. He may give short measure. He may accept presents from customers. Then others in the business think there is no reason why they should not do the same. "It is all business!" or, "One must do as others do!" is what they say. After a short time all the employees have taken the same tone, and the firm becomes known as a dishonest one. Unfortunately, in a case like this it is not possible to act as the ship did to the little screw. No one goes to the man who first begins and asks him not to do so. The bad example spreads like slow poison. Every one who contemplates a small dishonesty should use his imagination and try and see the long chain of people who may eventually become affected by his example.

A poet once said that greater than punishment in hell would be to gaze from heaven and see the consequences of our wrong-doing, to contemplate the unending chain

of misery and confusion, and then to have to say, "I am responsible. I set this ball rolling." That is the most awful thing I can imagine. It is better for us not to see the consequences of our deeds after they are done, but how good it would be if we could see beforehand what the consequences would be if we did certain things. This might make us stop our foolishness. How much wrong would be prevented if we only remembered that we are the destiny and providence of our fellow-men.

You may have heard of the Greek legends which tell us stories of family feuds, and of families on which a curse rested, like that of Agamemnon, where one deed of bloodshed followed another. The curse did not merely consist in an inherited wrong-mindedness, but in the terrible example set by some ancient forefather, which was always to be followed and renewed by descendants, so that they became confused in their ideas of right and wrong and lost their hold on realities and facts.

It is not only in workshops and families that you may see the importance of a single example. In school you will see that many boys guide themselves by your example although you are neither an older boy nor a master. I remember a boy in our class at school who had a habit of using bad language and very soon infected the whole class. In every one there are bad inclinations which only need encouragement. But at the same time there is the better self, which would be ashamed of the bad word. But directly the first shame

is over a bad beginning is made and the bad habit finds it easier and easier to have its own way. When you have once formed your habit it begins to have a bad influence on the others, and they follow your lead.

Do not forget, however, that good examples have just as powerful an effect as bad ones. They work like a charm. Once in a German town a fire broke out in the theatre. The audience was panic-stricken and began to rush to the doors, but the grand duke remained quietly in his place and ordered the band to play on. The good example had such an effect that the public left the theatre in an orderly manner.

You may call to mind similar things occurring at school. A group of boys may be standing together and one comes up and repeats a joke of which he is and ought to be a little ashamed. He expects every one to laugh, and if they do he will forget that he was a little ashamed of the joke and be ready to repeat another one of the same kind. But if there is just one boy who does not laugh it will make the others embarrassed and ashamed. They may pretend to be at ease and may laugh at him, but they are ashamed inwardly and are not so ready to laugh at another such joke. Whether we are aware of it or not, we all can and do influence those around us every day in such ways as this.

## THE WHIPPING BOY

I HAVE read of a curious custom which was followed at the courts of the kings of France some hundreds of years ago. When a little prince was naughty or idle he himself was not punished, but a little boy, who was kept for this purpose, had to be whipped instead before the eyes of the little prince who had been naughty. It was thought that this would have a great effect upon the prince, for whose sake the boy suffered.

Now, in one sense each of you has a little whipping boy or whipping girl. The only difference between you and the little princes of France is that their whipping boys moved and cried before their eyes and the princes were well aware of it. But often you do not notice when your whipping boy suffers. Do you not believe this? In a sense it is quite true. There is no wrong or naughtiness done in the world that some one else does not suffer for it, whether you yourself do or not.

For instance, if you use a bad word and another boy copies you, he may be punished for it, or else he may get into the bad habit and suffer for it later on. Or suppose you are untidy. Perhaps you are not always punished every time you are untidy or careless, but others often have to spend time and trouble putting in order things that you have left about, or they have to suffer for your wrong-doing. If all those who have had to suffer through our faults

were to speak at once there would be such a wailing and noise in the world that you would think a great calamity had happened. And that is leaving out of account all those who would suffer for our mistakes and faults long after we are dead. Do you know that the children you may have one day, if you do not take much thought and care, may be also forced to suffer much from your faults. All the roughness and rudeness and bad temper which you do not cure may serve one day as a bad example to your children, and they will have to suffer much correction and rebuke from you, from teachers, and other people in the world whom they annoy with these bad habits. So you see the cry of your whipping boys and girls would re-echo away into the future. That is the real meaning of the words, "He will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." Remember this and see how it is possible for you now to take thought for the children you may have some day, though you are still children yourselves. You do not need to think of food and clothing for them or the money you must earn, but you have to lay up a store of good habits, so that your life in future may be rich in blessing for them.





CHAPTER IX

SELF-RELIANCE



## CHAPTER IX

### SELF-RELIANCE

#### MY GRAND FRIENDS

I EXPECT you have heard that the stars are classified into those which shine by their own light and those which only borrow their light from others. The sun is a self-lit star, while the moon shines for us only so long as it is illumined by the sun. Thus it is no self-lit star, but borrows its light.

On the earth there are many people much like the moon and such stars. They do not seem to feel they are of any consequence themselves, except when the brilliance of some grand people is reflected on to them. When such people have been for a holiday we sometimes hear them speak in some such manner as this: "My friend, Lord Hoskins, recommended me to go to Bexhill-on-Sea, and on the way down whom did I meet in the carriage but Professor Brown, a relation of my wife's. 'Ah, how do you do, doctor,' he said, 'I am glad to see you. I have heard so much of you from Sir Howard, but as you are always in such distinguished company, I have not had the honour of meeting you.'"

In three minutes three grand friends are trotted out as if the man would say, "I am of no consequence myself. I am no shining light. I have to borrow my light."

Such people seldom let an opportunity pass without drawing every one's attention to the suns from which they borrow their glory.

Some children at school do this sort of thing in a childish way, but it is a great pity. They boast of their parents, or else they try to show off their riches, as if their own worth was increased by it. Of course, there are some other children who will think this boasting grand and be impressed by it, but the admiration and friendship of such are not worth having.

Most sensible people would say about such children, "What a pity they brag so much. They can have no real pride or they would not think it fine to talk of their riches or their famous father."

The poorest man doing honourable and useful work sheds a greater light than any boaster, even if he does not talk to emperors and ministers and is not related to lords.

But is it not right to be proud of good and great parents? Certainly, in your heart always, but it should not lead you to be always speaking of them to others. Even to yourself you should not be proud of their titles, money, nor descent, but of their goodness, kindness, or wisdom.

To think so much of external things is only to show yourself unrefined, uncultured, and uneducated. For education is that which enables us to distinguish between the essential and the unessential.

## CHAPTER X

### SALVATION



## CHAPTER X

### SALVATION

#### SAVING OF DRUNKARDS

A MAN was once pointed out to me who had been brought to the lunatic asylum through drink, and had come out cured, and had then become a good father and husband once again. I asked the head of the asylum how this had come about. He said, "I had given this man up as hopeless, for directly he was at liberty he drank again. I then happened to hear of a poor shoemaker who had founded a society of people who had sworn never to drink intoxicants. They had taken this resolution because they realised how much misery is brought into the world through drink, how many families are ruined by it, and how many weak-minded people are produced by it. So these few people banded themselves together to set a good example, just as mountaineers tie themselves together for safety in the dangerous places of the mountains. I persuaded this 'incurable' man to become one of them. He did, and has not drunk since. The fact that he was one of a number of people with the same aim and making the same effort saved him. He needed a spiritual rope and fellowship saved him. Since then many incurables have

been saved in the same way; not by driving them out of society, but by receiving them into a fellowship."

#### THE RECOGNITION

THERE is a story of a man who went away into foreign countries and travelled for many years, and when he returned home no one knew him, not even his sweetheart. But when his old mother met him she knew him at once. Her eyes were sharper than other people's, and through the tan and dust and lines of his face she recognised him and saw the traces of the face of the young boy. She heard the tones of a young voice in his greetings and saw in his eye the gleam of the old affection and frankness that was her son's.

We would see much in the faces of others if we only looked at them with the eyes of a mother. We give up hope so soon in those who do not attract us at first, and whom we find hard to get on with. It is a pity we cannot borrow the mother's eye, just as we do the magnifying glass. Perhaps in one sense we can. Try and think of your own mother when you are going to condemn some one. You will find it will make you consider that person more carefully than before. And you will find that what disturbed and misled you will disappear from his face.

If we are inclined to use bitter words let us think, and then our consciences will tell us to be kinder and juster as our mother would have been.



## THE DUST-BIN

HAVE you ever heard of the fate of all the rubbish that is put in the dust-bin? I expect you think it all vanishes for ever somewhere or other. For there are so many things in a dust-bin which have been "given up" by the doctors and pronounced "incurable." Things that have been thrown away as altogether useless—broken dolls and toys, pots and pans, rags and bones—there! I do not need to empty the whole dust-bin for you.

I once read a small book, called *Discoveries in House and Yard*, by an author who had taken the trouble to inquire into the fate of all the things which are to be found in a dust-bin, and he showed how nearly everything there could be turned to use. For instance, bones! The largest and best go to factories where they are cleaned and bleached and then made into knife-handles, piano keys, and such like things. Phosphorus is made from the smaller ones, and is used for the manufacture of matches. The rest is ground to powder and greatly valued by farmers as manure. The blacking which we use to clean our boots contains bone, for bone- or ivory-black is got from heated bones. From calves'-foot is obtained an oil which is used in the preparation of leather. Bits of leather are made into glue-boiling. Scales of fish are used for manufacturing pearl ornaments. Makers of artificial flowers use fishes'

eyes for unopened buds. Old rags, which were once used to make paper, are now taken to factories where they are shredded and woven together again with new wool, so that they begin their existence afresh. The other part that remains is used to make flock wall-papers. Rags which are unsuitable for the manufacture of paper are used to make *papier-mâché*, and thus are turned into tea-trays and such things. Bits of glass and broken bottles are melted up to make new ones. In short, all the things in a dust-bin are scattered to the four winds of heaven and go through such vicissitudes that they could well say at parting, "Well, brothers, when shall we meet again in a dust-bin?"

This human art of turning the oldest rags and dirtiest rubbish into useful, and even beautiful, articles for daily use must make us reflect how little art is used in dealing with human rubbish. How careless and unskilful is the treatment accorded to people who seem a little ragged or shabby in their minds or bodies. They are avoided directly their behaviour is disagreeable or unpleasant, instead of being subjected to a little of the art of transformation.

The most varied and careful processes are gone through to extract what is permanently valuable in the contents of a dust-bin, but when it comes to dealing with people it is different. Then we hear it said, "We will not play with him or talk to him any more; you cannot do anything with him. He's good for nothing."

## THE CHRYSALIS

SUPPOSE you found a chrysalis and did not know that from this cold and apparently dead thing a beautiful butterfly would emerge in the spring, you might throw it away as useless.

There are some people who are very like a chrysalis. Their characters seem so shut up and hard that any one who judged by outward signs would never imagine that they could be agreeable or friendly. Yet possibly the only thing needful is the spring sunlight to waken new life in them. By this I mean they need love and sympathy. For to such embittered, hardened, cold hearts sympathy and fellowship are like sunlight to the chrysalis.

If you kept your chrysalis in a cold dark cellar, no gay, beautiful butterfly would emerge from it, and so when people have experienced no kindness, tenderness, or love in their lives, no kindness or cheerfulness blossoms forth in them and they remain cold and reticent. If you ever meet such persons do not be repulsed by them, as so many thoughtless people are. No, try your power of bringing sunlight into their lives. Make them spread their wings. Even if you do not succeed, do not make them suffer for it, but ask yourself how much unkindness and coldness must have been at work to fix such characters.

## THE PAINTER

THERE were once some naughty children who were to have their portraits painted for their grandmother's birthday. Their parents took them to a famous painter and asked him if he would paint their portraits. "Yes," he said, rather unwillingly, for he did not like to put such ill-tempered faces on canvas. Everything was arranged and the children sat for him daily. After four weeks the picture was finished and every one was astonished at the lovely and happy expression on the faces, and yet no one could say the likeness was not true. "What magic did you use to get this expression?" the painter was asked. "I did not need any magic," he said. "I charmed it out of the children themselves. I told them beautiful stories while I was painting, which I made them repeat to me. Then all the beautiful feelings which were hidden in the children lit up their faces and I quickly caught the expression of love and goodness in their eyes and put it on the canvas. I have added nothing, I only drew out the beauty that was there. That is the work of painters. We are the discoverers of hidden beauty."

If only every one could be such a discoverer! I will tell you a secret. Patience will teach you such an art! Not the art of painting, perhaps, but yet the charming forth of hidden beauty. If you have angered your brothers and sisters by your rudeness or unkindness,

look at their faces and see if you would like to paint them then. Think if you could not bring quite another expression into them by weeks of redoubled kindness and love? Try and observe closely, as a painter does, and see if your goodness and kindness will not be reflected back in the light of their eyes and the expression of their mouths. How beautiful if that look would only last! Make it permanent then by remaining always kind and loving. How grand to please the parents of the "disagreeable" children by the beautiful pictures you have painted, not with oil-colours on canvas, but with the art of the heart on living faces.

#### WHAT WE CAN LEARN IN THE STABLE

"THAT horse is ruined for ever," I once heard a groom say. He was speaking of a very beautiful and powerful horse which no one could ride. He would throw every one who attempted to get on his back and he would try and squeeze them up against some tree, or even bite them.

Every groom that brought him food would strike him or shout at him. Even the riding master, who could ride him round the ring, would thrash him and pull the bridle hard.

One day a man who was a very good rider came to the stables and examined this horse, and was so pleased with him that he declared he would so train him that in three weeks he could be driven by the little

finger. Every one thought that this man would use even harsher treatment with whip and spurs, and looked forward to a battle royal. But there was no battle. When the horse was saddled the man spoke softly to him and gave him sugar to eat. Then he led him round the open space talking gently to him all the time. Suddenly he sprang into the saddle; the horse made two or three terrific plunges and then awaited the thrashing. None followed. He only felt the man's legs pressing him gently forward, but there was no sawing at the bridle and no blows. This treatment was continued for three weeks and the horse was quite changed. He became quiet and docile and was as gentle as the voice of the man who spoke to him.

Ask any experienced lover of horses and he will tell you how horses answer to such treatment. The Arab horses owe their nobility of bearing in great part to the fact that the Arabs treat them as friends. The most noble animal can be ruined by bad treatment, and the wildest creature can be tamed by good and loving handling.

You can see from this that gentleness is not weakness, but a great natural power which can tame animals that the roughest groom cannot manage. Some who have not believed in the power of the kind word and gentle action have learned its truth and influence in the stable.

## THE TWELVE BROTHERS

Do you remember the fairy story of the twelve brothers? When their little sister was born they were put under a spell, and when the little sister grew older and heard of this she set out to rescue them. Once, in her wanderings, she came quite near to them and saw growing in a garden twelve beautiful white flowers which she plucked to give to her brothers when she met them. Just as she had done so an old woman came up to her and said, "My child, what have you done? The twelve white flowers were your brothers, and now they have been changed into ravens for ever." Then the maiden asked weeping, "Is there no way of rescuing them?" "No," said the old woman, "there is no way in the world, except one, and that is so difficult that you will never be able to deliver them. For you must be dumb for seven years. You must not speak nor laugh, and if an hour only of the seven years is still wanting and you speak a single word then your brothers will be killed by it." At this the maiden said to herself, "I know I can save my brothers." So she went alone into a great forest and spent her time there spinning. One day a king found her and took her to his castle to be his queen. After some years of happiness at the castle she was accused of being a witch. At first the king would not listen to the slander, but gradually he came to believe it and consented to having her burnt.

She was tied to the stake, and the red flames began to lick her clothes, and still she bravely kept silence. Just as the flames were creeping nearer and nearer the last moment of the seven years was up. There was a great whirring and rushing of wings in the air and the twelve ravens appeared flying towards her. As the last second passed her brothers took their human form again and leapt down to the fire, tore down the piles of wood, and cut her bonds. Then at last the king's wife could explain to him the secret of her silence, and every one was perfectly happy.

Tell me, does it only happen in fairy tales that a sister can save her brothers through silence, or is it possible in real life? Is it possible to really save any one by silence, viz., free them from the wicked enchantment of a bad habit. For instance, if a brother is inclined to be quarrelsome and argumentative and rough in his behaviour so that he becomes a trouble to his friends and a danger to his own future life, can his sister save him? Certainly she can. She alone, if only she has enough love to make a sacrifice. What sacrifice? Well, for instance, that in a quarrel she does not try to have the last word although she may be in the right. She should keep a friendly silence. There is no example which can so well bring a rough boy to his senses and make the most quarrelsome brother ashamed as this. It may not do it at once, perhaps only after seven years, but it is the only way. The old woman was quite right, it is the only way; but she was also right



when she said that it is very, very difficult, and few can accomplish it. You must not imagine that in every quarrel your brother will always think you are right just because you have kept silence. No, but he will know it all the same after a time. In his own heart every one knows when he is in the wrong, where he went too far and where he has behaved rudely. This is why the mediæval poet Dante represented people finding their own place of punishment in hell and not being led there by the devil, for each knew himself how he had sinned and where his punishment would be.

In real life every one has the weakness of not liking to admit to another he has been in the wrong. So if the sister squabbles and argues and fights to get the last word the brother becomes more and more absorbed in his own defence, gets stubborn, and so it goes on. This is dreadful. Have you ever listened through an open window to two people quarrelling? It is the most dreadful thing in the world. It seems to darken the sunlight, and the sun hanging in the sky is like an oil lamp with pale flame and broken glass. Many people quarrel like this all their lives, and when they die one feels that they will not be able to even lie still in the grave together, but will meet as ghosts in the meadows, one saying, "It is," and the other, "It isn't!" Each imagines he is right for ever. Therefore, blessed are all the sisters who make a vow of silence in their hearts and go on their way saying, "I know I can save them," like the sister in the fairy tale.

It is a beautiful touch in the story that the sister was already in the fire and that the flames were licking her dress and yet she did not speak. This is like real life. It is fearfully hard to keep silence. It seems as if it is impossible to hold out and the words burn on one's lips. One feels unjustly accused and wants to clear oneself, perhaps by only a word. But just through one word the quarrel is kept up. Such a naughty boy only wants opposition and something on which to vent his anger and bad temper. Therefore, silence means salvation! that is the way.

And when your brothers seem under an enchantment which makes them ugly like the raven brothers, bite your lips and think, "Only wait, you poor ravens, you are really my brothers. Patience, I will rescue you."

#### SLEEPING BEAUTY

WE have already talked of the possibility of a sister saving her brother—now, can a brother save his sister? It would be very strange if he could not, for brothers are generally stronger than sisters. Of course, strong arms and a loud voice are not all that is necessary to protect any one. Much love is needed. Women are generally more loving than men—even when they are young. Even if a brother does not find it possible to save twelve sisters at once he may save one at least.

It is so good to have a sister with blue eyes, fair hair, and red cheeks. What a pity she is often so snappy!

If you tease her ever so little she makes taunting remarks, in games she is irritable, and when it comes to a dispute there is no talking with her. She is a rose surrounded by thorns; a sleeping beauty who is under a spell behind her hedge of thorns. Yes, when I read the story of Sleeping Beauty I always think of a snappy little sister so surrounded by the thorns of her own faults that you cannot see the roses of her kindness at all.

Do you remember how Sleeping Beauty was rescued from her enchantment? She was given a kiss. Yes, but if you gave the sister a kiss she might still be cross. Such things have been known to happen. Well, I think the kiss in the fairy tale only means that you must act in a loving spirit and show your sister that you love her. In this way alone will you be able to free her from her enchantment; in this way alone will you be able to influence her. But the brother who only beats at the hedge of thorns and shouts and scolds will never rescue his sister. He must take no notice of her jeers and always be loving and kind. Then the thorns will bend and let him through to his sister's heart like the prince in the fairy tale. Nothing makes any one who is in the wrong so ashamed as kindness and love do. It has a charm and a power just like that of the sun which makes all the flowers bend towards it. After a stupid squabble why not run down to the shops or into the woods and fetch a little bunch of flowers or some fruit or any little surprise for her

and give it to her saying, "I did not mean to be so horrid and treat you as I did just now; here is something to make it up"? That will act like the kiss in the fairy tale.

#### TEARS OF REMORSE

I WANT to tell you an old Italian legend of the Middle Ages. In the days of the Emperor Mauritius, in the old Byzantine empire, there lived a savage and ruthless bandit who recognised the law of neither God nor man. He inhabited a mountain, and the countryside was harassed and plundered by him and his men. Any one who denied him tribute might be sure that one fine day his possessions would be burnt and he and his lie murdered beneath the ruins. This terror spread and spread over the country, and at last the people applied to their powerful emperor. He sent a hundred warriors to capture the outlaw, but they were nearly all killed, while those that returned declared that he must be in league with the evil one. People began to think he must be invincible.

When the emperor heard the news he became very grave, and for a long time walked to and fro in his room. At last he formed a plan.

He took some of the purest gold from his treasury and sent for a pious monk, who was the cleverest worker of metals in the kingdom, and bade him make a splendid reliquary from it. The monk worked day and night

in his cell. He did not work for the sake of the reward, but his was a labour of love in the service of God. After a very short time the reliquary was finished and contained a bas-relief of Christ and a dove with the olive branch. While working the monk had thought and prayed continually for the cold hard heart of the robber for whom this image of Christ was intended.

When the reliquary was finished the emperor sent a messenger with it to the robber. It was mid-winter. The woods were stiff with ice and snow, though under the direct rays of the mid-day sun the silver drops were falling from the boughs. The messengers found the robber standing in the midst of his men like a great wild animal. He asked what the messengers wanted. One of them then stepped forward and handed him the holy image, saying, "The emperor sends you this as a sign of his mercy." The astonished robber held the golden reliquary in his guilt-laden hands. "For me," he cried, "for me?" Three times the man had to repeat the message. Finally the robber hung the chain with the reliquary round his neck, the reliquary that was blessed with a thousand prayers. Those prayers had not been in vain.

Every fresh day brought a change to the robber's heart. He took no more pleasure in what had formerly delighted him. There was a charm in the little reliquary that seemed to seize on his very soul; he would sit still and become quite absorbed in the image. But what made him so quiet and reflective was not the artistic

beauty of the little thing nor the value of the gold; it was the noble soul of the monk who had put his very life into every line and detail of his work. Gradually the robber awoke from the horrid nightmare of his life into new thoughts and feelings. He saw his past life in a new light and was filled with remorse. Crimes that had long been buried in his memory came back to him, and a horror of them tormented him so that he left his comrades and travelled for days till he came to the city where the emperor was living. It was just at the beginning of Easter week. There before all the people he threw himself at the emperor's feet and begged for pardon. The emperor saw that the robber's heart was softened, and said, "May God in heaven forgive me my sins, as I forgive thine." But the unhappy man could not forgive himself. He was followed day and night by the shadow of his sins. He pined away and died in hospital. And as morning broke the doctor who had tended him to the last dreamed that the demons and the angels fought for his soul. The chief of the devils held a pair of scales and laid on the one side all the shameful deeds of the man and showed mockingly to the angels how the other side sprang up because not a single good deed was to be found in the man's life. Then the angel seized the dead man's shroud which was wet with the tears of remorse and threw it into the empty scale. The scale sank and sank, and the devils disappeared gnashing their teeth. Then the doctor woke as the morning sun lit up the tranquil countenance of the dead man.

What secret of the human heart is revealed to us in this story? I do not ask what can we learn from this story, for such legends are not for the purpose of learning something in the way one does from a grammar or a mathematical text book. They have been written by people who see deeper into the human heart and have a greater insight into life than others, and when we read and reflect upon them, it seems as if our own insight into much that was formerly hidden from us becomes greater.

When I read this old story I thought that there are many people who live in such a robber's camp, a camp of defiance and fortified self-seeking—only there is no pious monk who will bring them a reliquary. That is, no one will have the necessary patience to rid himself of all anger and selfishness and to save others by a sign of deepest compassion. The greater number fly to weapons and threats and curses, and then say, "Nothing will do any good, there is no way of curing them." Ask yourselves how often you have turned your back on your brother or playmate instead of giving him a sign of your love? For instance, if we hear of a man like the robber, we are thrilled with horror and think, "He is nothing but a preying animal, and should be shot like a mad dog." But who knows whether hidden in the darkness of his soul there is not a seed of good, which perhaps is only dormant because it has never been awakened? If it is really true—and there are many examples of it—that even the roughest

and most hardened person can be saved by those who find the key of his heart, we may truly say it must be through our own fault and clumsiness that we cannot get on with a person and always quarrel with him. Your brother is no robber, hiding himself on a mountain and making treaties with the evil one. Yet you treat him as one on whom all kindness and goodness are wasted, and who can only be managed by brute force and hardness. I know you will say, "The other day I spoke quite quietly and kindly to him, but it was not any good;" I would answer that you did not do it thoroughly enough. To be heartily kind is only possible when you have banished all angry thoughts from your mind, and only think of how you can help your brother. The tone springs from the soul, and if the soul is hard and cold, then your tone will have no feeling, no gentleness, and will have no power over others. The finest compassion and truest love cannot only be put into a material work of art. The tone in which we speak may be a work of art. It may express such deep sympathy and willing assistance that others will feel their hearts touched like the robber by the reliquary. But this art is perhaps the hardest to acquire on earth. For it means that you must have your heart and your thoughts under as great control as your voice. Few people have strength and love enough to do it. Really great people have an abundance of strength for others. They are saviours in word and deed and draw the tears of remorse where others would only raise anger and cold selfishness.



CHAPTER XI

PARENTS AND CHILDREN



## CHAPTER XI

### PARENTS AND CHILDREN

#### MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

ONE day I saw an incident worth noting. A well-known actress was travelling in a tram-car with her mother. The mother apparently had not had the great advantages of a good education and training. She was very nervous and excitable. Her continual chatter and loud impatient manner drew every one's attention. She was continually finding fault with her grown-up daughter and snubbing her.

I have seen daughters in such a position as this also become impatient and retort, or perhaps say, "Oh, mother, please be quiet." This daughter behaved in a way which had a greater influence on the other people who saw her than her public performances did. She remained quiet, good-tempered, and respectful. She answered all the irritable questions quietly without showing any annoyance in her voice or behaviour. This little scene lasted perhaps ten minutes, and when they got out of the tram the passengers would have liked to have applauded and handed her a bouquet.

#### THE MOTHER

MOST of you have seen copies of the Sistine Madonna of Raphael. Do you think any such woman as this

one ever really lived? Hardly. But how then could Raphael paint such pictures if there were no such women as his Madonna? He himself has told us how he did this. He observed mothers very closely and found beauty in all of them, and as the bee collects the honey so he gathered all the beauty he saw and reproduced it in one picture. You see then that the beauty and dignity are not mere creations of the imagination, but really taken from life itself. The purity and love of no living woman is to be compared with that of the Madonna, but in every mother who bends her head over her child there is something holy and divine. Only you must learn to look for it. Many people do not see it because the mother is sometimes ill and looks tired. She may have rough hands and look like a working woman, and even sometimes be cross or irritable from worry and fatigue. So people do not see the halo round her head. A great artist is a man who sees more than other men, and such an artist was Raphael. Mere appreciation of the beauty of his picture is not the greatest thing an artist teaches us. His greatest gift to us is the power of looking deeper and farther than we did before. After having looked at this picture you ought to see your own mother with quite other eyes than you do now. Look at her sweet expression when she bends over your bed for the good-night kiss, or when she is tending one of your sisters who is ill. Do you think you will see the halo round her head? It is not a real halo, but you will see a

lovely expression in her eyes and face which comes because she is not thinking about herself. The more a man or woman thinks about others the more divine is their expression, and that is why people say, "My mother is an angel."

Of course, I know that many mothers are not angels, but are weak, even bad tempered and irritable, so that they sometimes treat their children unjustly. Do you think that Raphael did not know that? But he looked beyond, and only thought of the sleepless nights, the anxiety and care, the inexhaustible love and tenderness with which thousands of mothers in the whole world tend their children day and night. The beauty of motherhood seemed so great to him that in its light the weaknesses of some mothers are forgotten in the glory of their motherhood. So I say to you, if you behave to your mother with love and reverence even if she is cross or irritable, you are an artist of God's grace, for you have eyes which can see through all imperfections and realise the holiness and dignity of the mother. If I see any one who behaves with courtesy and tenderness towards his mother and treats her like a queen, I say to myself, "He has Raphael's eyes; he knows what a mother is." I once heard a man whose mother was as rough and rude as a wicked woman in a fairy tale, and in spite of that he treated her with such gentleness and reverence that she might have been a princess. When he was asked why he did this he said, "The mother who has once held a child in

her arms is holy to me. She is enveloped in a sacred robe, and therefore I shall bow myself before her as long as I live."

I often notice that sons and daughters when they begin to grow up get impatient with and impertinent to their mother. If you reproach them with this they will say, "Yes, but it is mother's own fault, she is always finding fault with us, and treating us roughly and impatiently." Yes, but why has she grown so nervous and irritable? Remember how cross and snappy you are when you have only been awake one night. And how many nights has your mother been kept awake by you? I do not mean only the nights when you were ill, but I mean those nights in which she has lain wakeful, thinking of your faults and naughty ways. Do you know how many troubles she has borne of which you have never heard? She would have to sleep for a year if she had to make up all the sleepless nights she has gone through for your sake. But she has no time for that, and so her nerves are weak and she shows it by impatience and irritability. But when you remember that she lost her strength through you, you ought to blush with shame for answering her roughly and rudely.

## THE HOAR FROST FELL

HAVE you ever heard this little poem?—

The hoar frost fell in a night of Spring,  
On the tender blue-bell flowers it fell,  
And they were withered and perished.

A youth did love a maiden well,  
Swiftly together from home they fled,  
Nor father nor mother knew it.

They wandered hither, they wandered thither,  
Their lot ne'er knew its lucky star,  
Undone they were and perished.

“Nor father nor mother knew it.” There lies the whole story. The maiden and the youth could not be happy or fortunate, for without faithfulness there can be no happiness on earth. He who without a word leaves father and mother to follow his own wishes foregoes the blessing which faithfulness brings. He influences his own happiness by affecting the love and kindness which he wishes to experience from others. Our failure to fulfil our duty to our parents will be followed by failure to have right relations with others also. There is a saying, “The parents’ blessing builds the children’s houses.” By this is meant not only the verbal blessing or the money, but the great truth that those who have not understood how to lovingly defer to parents so that the separation may be a happy and peaceful one will never prosper in the larger social life. For they will still less know how to preserve the right

relationships with others, or to exercise proper self-control, and so will live troubled and loveless. The proper fulfilment of filial obligations is the greatest proof of ripeness for life and fate that a human being can show.

Certainly there are instances where grown-up children cannot and should not sacrifice their wills to their parents. But he who leaves home secretly in anger or bitterness will never find true peace. It is just in such circumstances that patience is the most needful virtue. Self-control must be exercised, and what *must* be done should be done with inexhaustible love and deference. For only with the highest and purest of intentions and convictions has a son or daughter the right to go his or her own way. But where is there a nobler, better, or more urgent opportunity to prove the sincerity and purity of the intentions and convictions than the manner of obtaining the desired liberty from parents?

“There is no man that hath left father and mother for my sake,” said Christ; but notice he said, “For my sake.” Therefore he who wishes to go his own way in opposition to father and mother must ask himself a thousand times, “Is it really for the sake of the highest or for mere self-seeking and self-will?” A young person should distrust himself for a long time and read serious and noble books so that his parting from his parents may bind him still firmer in their hearts; so that he may remain safe in their love, nor lose happiness and good fortune in the outside world.



## CHAPTER XII

WHAT OUR ACTS MAKE OF US



## CHAPTER XII

### WHAT OUR ACTS MAKE OF US

#### RUDE AND GREEDY

WHEN children are told to be kind and unselfish they generally think it means they are to give their own things up to others. "Give up your apple to George and don't drink all the cocoa so that Amy may have a little more." But they do not want to do so. They say to themselves, "Why must we always think of others? They should get what they can for themselves." Such children think that love and kindness mean giving to others at a loss to themselves. Of course there is a loss, but only of one kind. In another way they are richer than before. Not perhaps in sweets or buns, though even these would have been lost very soon if they had had them. But they are richer in the power of giving, and of giving what is dear to themselves. And this power is the most precious that a person can possess. Without this the very things that give a man pleasure and rejoice his heart may weaken his character and enslave his soul.

But the more love a man gives the greater becomes his character. When he gives his money, his material possessions grow less. When he lights one flame from

another the first remains the same however many others he lights from it. But when he gives love, his own love grows ever greater.

#### THE SMALLEST PIECE

"You should take the smallest piece on the plate," said a mother to her little boy, who at once asked why.

What answer would you have given him? That more is left for others? Yes, but that is just what he does not understand. If he likes it so much why should he leave it to others? "First come, first served," says the proverb.

Perhaps the best answer to the question, "Why should I take the smallest piece?" would be to say, "Because it makes you really happier when you have given your friends something nice than when you have taken it yourself." You may think, perhaps, that the little boy is too young to feel that kind of happiness: the character must be riper for that. He thinks it his greatest misfortune when the others take the best piece. Well, how can we bring him to choose the smallest piece?

I should say to him, "Yes, it is true the largest piece may taste nicest, and whoever secures it may be pleased, but the pleasure is soon over." A person who always takes the biggest piece and then looks for more will gradually have a very greedy expression appear on his

face, an expression something like that of a bird of prey. It seems as if the biggest piece casts a wicked spell and turns people who grasp at it into animals; on the other hand, it seems as if the smallest piece has also a magic power on the people who really take it out of unselfishness and modesty and not for appearance sake. Watch a modest person and you will see I am right. This is a secret known to few people, but any one who knows it does not take the largest piece. He knows that though he apparently loses, in reality he gains. For he gains a power of will, in kindness of heart, and his face will have a loving and kindly expression.

#### PRESIDENT LINCOLN

PRESIDENT LINCOLN was one day riding through an uncultivated district in America when he saw a pig struggling in vain to extricate itself from a swamp in which it was being drowned. The president jumped from his horse and pulled the pig from the morass, naturally, in so doing, getting well covered with mud himself. News of this incident spread throughout the neighbourhood and people wondered why a president of the great United States should take so much trouble about a mere common pig. But the president explained, "I did not do it for the pig's sake alone, but also for my own."

Now what did he mean by that? He meant that when

one shows sympathy and kindness to those who are in distress the benefit is not theirs alone, but is shared also by ourselves; they increase our power of doing good by keeping our moral senses alert and ready for action.

“Never accustom yourself to see a living creature needlessly suffer,” is a good rule to remember and act upon. Like the evil spell in the old fairy tales which turned living men to stone, familiarity with and indifference to suffering harden the heart and dull the sense of sympathy.

To “sympathise with” means to “feel with” others, and those who cannot do this cannot be really said to live.

If President Lincoln had left the pig to flounder helplessly to its death, he would have wilfully neglected and chilled the spirit of sympathy within his bosom. In that case he might have been more ready to leave the negroes of America to sink deeper and deeper into the swamp of misery and slavery, instead of becoming, as he did, their chief deliverer. When fighting for their delivery, he encountered also, as in the rescue of the pig, many most disagreeable consequences; he was reviled and abused. Hatred and malice were heaped upon him, so that sometimes even his brave heart almost despaired of attaining its object. Let us remember, then, that those people who merely desire their own personal ease, who care only to eat, drink, and sleep in comfort, will, by such selfishness, gradually dry up the springs of love and pity in their own hearts

and be in danger of remaining for ever poor mean-souled creatures incapable of helping their fellow-men.

#### THE STOLEN INDIA-RUBBER

A LITTLE girl once stole a piece of india-rubber from a school-fellow. When she was scolded and punished for this she said she had not hurt any one as the india-rubber belonged to a rich girl.

How would you have replied to the little thief? Does it really not matter if you steal from rich people who will not miss the things?

Stealing is, first of all, taking something which does not belong to you. There are certain rules which human beings have to keep, and certain limits within which they have to walk, but hogs and sheep stray quite happily into a strange field and graze there till the dog drives them away. But the person who does not keep the boundaries of "mine and thine" is like a drunken man who staggers over the path and cannot keep a straight path. Whether he tumbles right or left, on a flower bed or in a ditch, it is all the same to him. He is tipsy. That tells the whole story, and we keep out of his way.

Whether a piece of india-rubber is stolen from a rich or a poor girl makes no difference whatever. Whoever commits such an act over-steps the line of honour and enters on a risky path, doing himself an injury money cannot repair. He fills with grief those who know where such a course leads.

Therefore if you become aware that in your class there is a little comrade who seems to be wandering from the straight path, have a little talk with her something after this fashion. “Gertrude, have you ever seen in a shop window a notice ‘Guarantee against thieves—we sell burglar-proof safes.’ These are safes which are so strongly made that they cannot be opened with a jemmy. That is a good idea, but there is another and more necessary security against theft. There must be a protection within people themselves against the petty theft which, under some harmless excuse, will lead them on to the unsafe road. This little theft has tempted you to commit the first small dishonourable action. Do you know how you can protect yourself against it? Only by keeping your fingers as strictly from the property of others as if a flaming fire was round it. That is the only protection against theft. Do not keep a farthing which does not belong to you, even if it belongs to a millionaire. If it has no value for him, it has great value for you. It is the most important piece of money in the world, for your whole honour depends on it; your self-respect depends on not keeping it in your fingers.

There was once a millionaire in New York who bought a paper from a newsboy and gave him a dollar. The boy had no change and the millionaire, being in a hurry, told his coachman to drive on. When the carriage reached the house, there stood the boy panting. He had quickly got the change and run after the



carriage in order to return the money which did not belong to him. The millionaire took him at once into his service. Why? He knew the boy was secure against theft. He could rely on him. 'He will not consider his rags or my riches, but will only have regard to his own honour,' thought the millionaire. The boy knew a hundred-dollar note even was little to the millionaire, but to himself it was much whether he kept the change from that note or not. He felt he would not be any different from the dogs in the street if he had not given back what did not belong to him.

So, children, for your own sake do not touch what is not yours. The dishonour will not affect the person whose things you take, but it will hurt you mortally.



## CHAPTER XIII

### OUR WORK



## CHAPTER XIII

### OUR WORK

#### SOULFUL HANDS

"SHE has soulful hands," I once heard a hospital nurse say. What did she mean? Can the human soul express itself even in the hands? Can it be sent like the blood to any part of the body by a beat of the heart? No. But just as a good son, though far distant, will be as true in his words and actions to his mother's teaching as if her eye was upon him, so the human hand can lend the soul such willing aid it would seem that the soul itself is in the finger tips and in every touch. Then you can say the hand is soulful. It cools the forehead of the sick, binds their wounds, and smoothes the pillow in such a way that the patient knows the hand does not express a wish to be rid of an irksome duty. He feels it is guided by a tender love, anxious care, and thought for all that would soothe and calm.

Such tenderness is not gained by the power of a single resolve. It is the result of laborious practice in the smallest things. A Swiss poet tells the story of a poor little girl called "Strawberry Mary," who supported her mother by gathering strawberries. She was very careful with the strawberry plants in picking off the

fruit; she neither broke off the unripe berries nor trampled down the leaves. Through this practice she gained a special grace and refinement in her movements. At last a lady who had often watched Mary in the wood took her to be her maid at the castle, and she was surprised to find that Mary was as gentle and attentive in the sick room as if she had been trained as a nurse. The poet in his story says, "The gentleness that Mary had used in picking strawberries now showed itself. The lady said she had never felt so light a hand tend her in sickness."

This story shows that refined hands are important, as well as refined minds. You can practice gentle movements in laying a table, watering flowers, or wiping glasses. These little things are none too small for gentleness, and may be done in a rough or in a gentle manner. Even the smallest actions may be raised out of the realm of carelessness and awkwardness into that of soulful gentleness.

#### THE ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

STORIES of young princes who have acceded to their father's throne and have brought order to a long-troubled land and peace to its people attract us all and set us dreaming and wishing also to be king's sons and do gallant deeds. But the work of a king's son is far harder than we imagine. Many a king's son has failed to redeem his early promise, because he has

shown himself too weak to govern evil doers. But there have been other princes who have succeeded. It has been by a never-tiring energy and an iron will. They have never rested till all disturbers of the peace were crushed. One obstinate fortress after the other was conquered. The king would appear unexpectedly in different parts of the kingdom to uphold the right and see that nothing important took place without his knowledge and consent.

The human will is like the king's son. Unfortunately it takes many years to establish him firmly on his throne. Sometimes we do much that makes it very difficult for the will to become firmly established. He has many troublesome subjects. Yet even small children may take steps towards securing his accession. First of all they move their arms and legs about like plants in an aquarium, as if in a dream. Then they gradually get control of them. In learning to walk the chief thing is to get the limbs under the control of the will. Another step is learning to sit still at school. The will gradually learns to rule over the desire to move about. Other things follow. Just as a young king travels round to the different towns and has homage paid him, so the will exercises its right over the different functions of the body and demands homage and obedience. For example, the good will wants to direct and control the tongue, to keep silence or a promise. Yes, try and look on it in this way. Do not let any opportunity pass, for if the will does not become

the ruler in the realm at the right time, it may be too late and the rebels will have it all their own way. The tongue is one of the most troublesome of subjects, and if it is not controlled early, it may become an "unruly member" and bring much trouble into your life and the lives of others. How many people have been mortally hurt by ridicule and contemptuous words? How many remarks have slipped from our tongues which we would afterwards give worlds to recall? So I say, teach your tongue obedience and think of the accession to the throne when some out-of-place joke or remark occurs to you in lesson time.



CHAPTER XIV  
LOVE OF OUR FELLOWS



## CHAPTER XIV

### LOVE OF OUR FELLOWS

#### HOW TO DEAL WITH VIOLENT AND IRRITABLE PEOPLE

PERHAPS there is nothing more difficult in the world than to learn how to deal with violent-tempered or irritable people and to keep one's own temper at the same time. We may determine to do so, but directly the other says things that hurt us or make us indignant we forget all our good resolutions. Excitement and unkindness are more catching than measles, and the one who catches them from another often becomes the worse of the two. Afterwards come regret and dismay. What is to be done? I will tell you a very good plan. You must pretend you are a kind of doctor and have a patient to deal with. In truth, a violent person is not quite healthy-minded. His nerves are not under control, and at the time of his excitement he should be treated like a patient and managed with tact and patience. If you treat him as you would a quite sane person you irritate him still more.

How do we treat people who are suffering from some mania? We try and turn their thoughts in another direction. We should not contradict them abruptly, but sympathise and try to bring them to a quiet frame

of mind without attracting their attention to the process.

Professional doctors are not the only ones needed, but also the doctors of the home, those who know how to calm a heated argument, to soothe the irritable, and speak a word of balm where the fever of the soul is above normal point.

May success crown the efforts of such physicians!

Love, kindness, and patience are the great things necessary when we are dealing with violent or irritable people, especially at the moment of their excitement. They are usually very sensitive, and the smallest thing causes them to feel hurt and offended. They put themselves at once on the defensive and become the attacking party. They are soon in a highly irritable frame of mind, just as physically weak people easily get into a fever or have palpitation of the heart.

Though I say you should be gentle and considerate to such people I do not mean you are to let them have their own way in everything. That would be the worst thing you could possibly do for them. But I do say, everything at the right time. To blame or correct them in a moment of excitement is only to throw oil on the fire. At such a time an excitable person will not bear to be crossed, and only becomes more irritable. He would not see that he was to blame in any way. You must be patient and kind, and afterwards perhaps he will see he was wrong

and be sorry for it. Then is the proper time for a serious word of astonishment or sorrow at the scene that has taken place. But even then keep in mind the wise saying, "Build golden bridges for a flying foe." Tell him that you are sure he did not mean to behave like that and was not quite himself during the storm.

A friend of mine once visited a lunatic asylum and was standing on a balcony four stories high with a poor inmate, who said to him, "Jump down here. I am an angel and will see that no harm comes to you." If my friend had abruptly refused, the man might have become violent and have thrown him down, but my friend said, "Of course, I know you would take care that I should come to no harm, but I would rather stay here in heaven with an angel." The poor man felt flattered, and laughed and forgot all about jumping off the balcony. This is the kind of method we should use in treating violent and irritable people. Do not contradict and thwart them, but use means to bring them to a calm and peaceful state of mind. Or wait until another time if you wish to achieve something.

When a man wishes to stop runaway horses he does not dash straight in front of them and suddenly pull the bridle, but he runs a little way with them and tries to bring them gradually to a standstill.

When people lose the bridle of their actions, and anger and violence run away with them, you must go a little way with them or you will be trampled under foot.

## FEELERS

HAVE you ever watched the antennæ of butterflies or the horns of snails? Before touching a strange object these animals stretch forth their feelers, as we may call them. These feelers are far, far more sensitive than the other parts of the animals' bodies, and can find out and report on an object before the animal itself touches it.

I sometimes think how well it would be if people could also have such feelers, not only for the purpose of protecting themselves, but to make them a little more sensitive to the feelings of the people around them, so that they could behave more kindly and considerately and not wound and annoy others at every step.

One day I saw a woman in a train. Something sad must have happened, for she had red and swollen eyes and could not keep back her tears. Just opposite sat two boys nudging each other and staring inquisitively at her. It did not seem to occur to them that the woman must have disliked being stared at and would have been grateful if the boys had looked the other way and pretended they did not see. And I really believe they would have nudged and stared just the same if a hunch-back had come in. They never seem to imagine that people with something repulsive or striking about them are depressed and made nervous when they see others show their curiosity by looking

wonderingly at them. Such boys know nothing of the feelings of people in such circumstances. If they knew what a kindness it is to look away from people who are curious in appearance, are ill, or in trouble, as if their attention had not been attracted, they would like to do it. But the "feelers" are wanting.

But a human being could perhaps make for himself spiritual "feelers," if he had no physical ones. How would it be if he always tried to put himself in another's place and tried to judge by outward signs what the inner feelings are, just as a young Indian learns to recognise the track of his enemy from the smallest broken blades of grass?

I know people who have such spiritual feelers, and a wonderful sensitiveness to the moods, feelings, and needs of their fellow-creatures, and who act accordingly. But it is a very difficult art to acquire.

Do you remember Homer's story of King Alcinous who made the bard cease his song because he noticed that it had made Odysseus weep? That was nearly three thousand years ago, yet it seems to me that our spiritual feelers have not developed much since then; perhaps they have even become stunted. For the most part, people trouble so little about their neighbours. The old Egyptians, however, had got so far as to have an exhortation: "Thou shalt not laugh with the sorrowful, nor weep with the joyful." This saying can be read to-day in the burial chambers of the pyramids. How is it with us? Alas, it too often happens that

we disturb a happy party by miserable and moping behaviour, or wound the sorrowful by thoughtless merriment.

There are many, many opportunities in daily life when a pair of sensitive feelers would be very useful. For example, if one of your brothers is being scolded, is it kind and considerate to stay in the room to see him humiliated? But if you have no feeling thoughts which tell you how unpleasant it must be to him, you will be thick-skinned enough to stay in the room.

You must use your feelers carefully too when you are relating your own good fortune and describing exciting travels you have made. You must think whether your listener is not perhaps unfortunate, and has to suffer much deprivation, and you are making him feel doubly his unhappy circumstances. You have no tact and perception of the feelings of others if you exclaim, "It is jolly to have a sister!" in the presence of a friend suffering from the recent loss of a little sister.

If grown-up people are disputing or quarrelling, a child should always leave the room, for they will afterwards be very sorry that any one heard them speak in such a way.

Very few children are really considerate and tactful to their parents. They mean well, but if they do not feel what their parents are needing they cannot show their love in their actions. The children must try and grow feelers and notice quickly when father needs quiet or mother is irritable from too much housework, so that



they both may be spared noise and questions. You cannot be of much help in times of illness, when the patient is too tired to talk, unless you have learnt to read his needs from his expression.

It is unfeeling to laugh at a school-fellow's patched knickers, big boots, and funny clothes, for children of poor parents cannot easily get new clothes and have to wear old and home-made things. If you laugh, you are just as feelingless as if you laughed at a poor man because he had no money.

It is far more important for your whole life to get a pair of feelers than it is to have a pair of skates or a bicycle. The best of it is that they cost nothing and no one can steal them.

#### A SISTER OF MERCY

NOT long ago I met a very rich man who had travelled round the world and gone through many wonderful experiences. When I asked him where he had spent the happiest time of his life, he answered, "When I lay sick with the typhoid fever in the Munich hospital." "That was where you were happiest?" I asked astonished. "Yes, a sister of mercy tended me and I shall never forget her patience and kindness. I was a stranger to her, she had many other patients to care for, and was on duty day and night. But for the whole eight weeks I never saw any other expression but that

of gracious kindness on her face. There was never the slightest trace of annoyance or irritability. Yes, I was in heaven at that time."

He spent his happiest hours in the hospital! Yet think how a rich man is envied by many poor people. They imagine he must be perfectly happy. He often spends several hundred pounds a day. He can eat as much as he likes, buy what he likes, and travel where he likes. He just goes first class through life, and yet this rich man longed for the hospital in Munich, where he had the typhoid fever and had been tended by a sister of mercy! Why did he long to be there? Because love makes heaven, and not money.

The most touching and beautiful thing in the world is this pitying love, asking nothing for itself, content to merely serve and save.

All that can be bought for gold is as nothing compared to a tender look and whispered words of comfort and consolation. The more money a man has the less real love is likely to fall to his share. Just like the magnet mountain in the fairy tale which drew all the iron out of the passing ships, drew the bolts and nuts and everything made of that metal, money attracts the greed and the avarice of men and produces bad passions. This is why the example of the sister of mercy, with her never-tiring care, is like a star shining in this world of strife and impatience, and kindles a longing in us for all that is good and beautiful.

Do you think this rich man is the only one who has

been attracted by a sister of mercy such as I have described? No, there are many who have never met such a gracious sister of mercy, and many who are coarse and hard themselves and do not feel the need of love or pity. But in the depths of their hearts men know that patient love alone brings the highest happiness and leads to heaven, only people do not know the way to get there. They look for an example of kindness and love, a guardian angel against their own hardness, but they do not find it here. For there are, alas! very few sisters of mercy, and they are only for the sick and destitute. The healthy people have none. And yet, really, they need them just as much as those that have wounds and sickness, for they have wounds and weaknesses of the soul which need more patient tending than the diseases of the body.

Arrogance, for example, is not outwardly visible like a swollen foot, but is it any less an illness? The soul needs more serious and loving treatment than a swollen foot. The bad foot would not be improved by rough handling or some one treading on it, neither would the soul by harsh treatment. When any one is passionate, sensitive, or suspicious, is he not sick, and is not a part of him suffering from inflammation? Does he not need care? Can his inward disease not ruin him if he is wrongly treated for it? Who of us is quite healthy and whole? The patients in hospitals have often healthier souls and nerves than many of the people strolling about in the sunshine. Nearly every one is

sick in some part of his character and strong and splendid in another.

So you see I want to beg you all to be sisters of mercy. I do not mean that you are to go into a hospital or join an Order. No, I want to remind you of the sister of mercy in the Munich hospital and ask you if you do not think it lovely to be like her? Could there be anything more beautiful than to shed such light and peace around you as she did? How different the world would be if there were more loving-hearted people tending the bad-tempered and arrogant, the avaricious, the cold-hearted, the rebellious, and the callous? People might recognise these examples of love and self-sacrifice and long to follow them. You must not think it so easy to become sisters of mercy. What do they have to learn? They have to learn to move lightly and gently, to touch the sick very tenderly, to bind their wounds and soothe them. They have to forget their own comfort in a flood of sympathy and patience. To become a sister of mercy to the healthy is even more difficult, because they do not appeal so to our pity and irritate us more than the sick. Still, practice will do wonders, and if you long in your heart to bring sunlight to your fellow-creatures your countenance will soon be a light to them. You have an opportunity for practice when you hear some one being slandered or picked to pieces. Be then a sister of mercy and say, he is not so bad as he seems to be, he has his good points, and what he says is not meant as

badly as appears to be the case. That is, speak of his good points and calm the detractors.

When you are with over-sensitive and quarrelsome people make a little promise to yourself to be true to love and patience. So that some day people who think of the time they spent with you will say, "Yes, it was like being in heaven."

#### PEACE-MAKERS

NOWADAYS we continually hear of women winning places in professions, such as those of medicine, the law, or science, which formerly belonged to men alone.

There is one beautiful profession for women which they can practise at the same time as their other work. I dare say that you have heard that in the Roman Catholic Church the Virgin Mary is worshipped as the mediator for all penitent sinners. "Holy Mother of God, plead for us," they pray, and hope that Mary, who rose to such eminence and sanctity through the trials and sufferings of life, will speak words of gracious compassion for men before the throne of God.

But here on earth women may also exercise this beautiful profession of intercession and peace-making. Whenever any one is being blamed or condemned in their presence they can step forward and try to ease the severity of the judgment. Human life with its hatred and back-biting and misunderstanding offers a wide field for mediators. Whenever you hear a fellow-

creature being lightly talked about or condemned there are two courses open to you. You can agree and fall in with the others, bringing your little contribution of contempt or censure to the general disapprobation, or you can take him under your protection, try to explain his action, bring his good points to light, and do your best to clear up the misunderstanding.

Choose the latter course, and it will make you happy. You will feel yourself a kind of guardian angel to an absent fellow-being, and you will be really a guardian angel to those who are detracting also, for you may stop them from being still more unkind.

Whether it is a rival or a dear friend of yours that is being discussed no woman should add fuel to the fire of scorn and anger, but here also be a peace-maker. Try to put the person's action in the most favourable light. Ask yourself whether it would not be wrong of you to say a word against him. In this way you may even be doing yourself good. For it is true that everything we say in blind hostility and dislike avenges itself in our lives somewhere and somehow, if only by hardening and blunting our feelings.

To be a peace-maker it is necessary to study and learn to practise your profession. Keep your eyes open and watch the life and speech of your companions, and sooner or later you will find an opportunity of defending and softening. You will find more than this. You will find stars in the sky. You will sorrowfully realise that often you have helped the scandal-monger and

stirred up strife instead of making peace. You will find how much bravery and self-control is necessary to work in this beautiful profession of peace: take the words of Sophocles, spoken through the mouth of his heroine Antigone more than two thousand years ago, for your motto, "I am not here to hate but to love."

CAN WE LEARN NOTHING FROM GIRLS?

TO-DAY I am going to tell you about a funny picture I saw lately. It represented a scene under the trees on a village green. A group of boys and girls was gazing at a tiny graceful little maiden who was daintily lifting her skirts and trying to execute a new dance she had seen the elder girls learn. Behind her crept a boy mocking her, holding his knickers with spread fingers and trying to bend his head as prettily as she. Of course he was not succeeding, but only making himself ridiculous.

But it would not always be ridiculous for boys to imitate girls. It would do no harm if boys tried to learn a little more grace of movement from the girls. They might well imitate them in other things too; in the tones of their voices and their whole behaviour.

Or do you perhaps feel ashamed to learn anything from a girl, and believe that to be manly you must be rough and shout and bang the doors so that the whole house trembles.

Well, I think quite the opposite. If you watch people

skating you will notice the clumsiest skaters make the most noise and confusion. They do not know what to do with their arms and legs; besides they do not know how to avoid tumbling into the other skaters and so causing collisions.

But he who has strength, iron muscles, and practice glides as lightly as a dancer. There seems no effort in his movements, he runs into no one, but winds in and out through the crowd. If he does ever come into collision with an unskilful skater, he does not merely say, "Hello," and skate off grumbling, but stays and helps the other to his feet and then glides quickly away.

It is the sign of a strong man that he has his muscles under control. This does not mean merely with reference to sports, but in everything in life. Rough and loud behaviour is not a sign of strength but of weakness. You are only a novice all your life if you do not get beyond this stage.

There are people who are always disputing with others. They are novices. It seems as if they have not strength enough to keep out of disputes, but take every opportunity for a quarrel. You have imagined that gentleness, tact, and modesty are signs of weakness, and not for boys. No! the greater power you possess, the more manly you really are, the gentler you should be in your behaviour. Leave roughness to the stumbler, the novice who has neither legs, arms, nor tongue under control, and whom we must forgive because he has not yet gained the right kind of strength.



## DREAMS OF THE FUTURE

"A PEEP at the Year 2000," or a "Journey into the Future," are titles sometimes seen on the backs of books which tell us all about the wonderful inventions and discoveries which the future will bring to lighten the lot of man.

It is not only in books of this kind that we find such ideas, but also in the serious books of scientific thought. Electricity and chemistry are to find for us things of whose existence we have scarcely dreamed. Many people speak as if the happiness of man depended fundamentally on electricity, dirigible balloons, and telephone wires. These are to dry all tears and soothe all sorrows. Do you believe all this?

If we are to indulge in dreams, I know dreams which can be spun around things much more vital to the happiness of mankind than these material comforts. I will enumerate some of the dreams of inventors, comparing them with those I would put in their place.

Have you heard that the time may not be far distant when we shall get soup from coal and bread from wood? That would be a great achievement certainly. How lucky are the coal and wood to have people interested enough to discover their capacity for showing a new and undreamt-of value! Would you ever have imagined that a liquid food could be obtained from the hard black stuff which soils your hands? Human beings are often more unfortunate. They so seldom find any one

who believes that there is something quite different in them than what appears on the surface, and that it is only waiting to be properly drawn out.

How did people come to think of getting soup from coal? The idea came to them through their knowledge of the properties of coal. It contains all the materials necessary for making soup, but in other chemical combinations which have to be brought about.

Are there not also the materials for goodness within us? But these materials are mixed with much that is evil, and often their presence is hardly suspected. Would it not be grand to find the magic incantation that would change the rough, weak, and stupid into refined and lovable people? That would be far better than the tale of the soup. What will be the value of the new properties of coal and wood if only the same quarrels and heart-burning are shown by those that sit around the soup? Will there be an art of intercourse in the future which will draw out and separate the hidden powers of goodness from combination with the elements of evil? We get a faint idea of the beauty and blessedness of such a power when we meet one of those gracious personalities whose presence seems to draw out all that is good in us. Such people have a great influence; for their whole manner and tone make us forget all our hard and unkind thoughts and inspire us with the wish to resemble them. Will the time come when all have this power, and practise the art of helping each other to live out the higher life?

The manufacture of a new kind of telescope is the occasion for all kinds of speculation. Shall we be able to see the funny people on Mars, or at least their streets and houses? The power of the microscope rouses all kinds of interesting questions. Shall we be able to see that persistent enemy of mankind—the bacillus? It makes me very sad to think how little all these discoveries have helped us. For our happiness and progress depend far more on what goes on in our own minds, where the microscope and the telescope are useless, than they do on the discovery of the bacillus and the stars. Yes, if we had a microscope that could show us a small bad inclination in our characters, and another glass to show us what that little fault, if uncontrolled, would be like in twenty years, and the influence it might have on our lives, then we should be masters of our fate. Think how useful to have microscopes which could show us the germ of falsehood or vanity or selfishness in an apparently harmless speech or action!

I dream of a time when united observation and thought will make the laws of our minds so well-known to us that we shall be able to conquer many faults which now overcome us. That time is not yet come. At present we look at our own faults through the reducing glass, and only recognise them when they have grown too strong for correction.

Much is hoped from the future of electricity. The electric railways and the telephone will soon take away the dread of separation, and it may be possible to

travel as easily to one's friends as to hear them speak.

This all sounds very wonderful, and certainly those who make these discoveries should be honoured. But what is the good of the telephone if it only spreads scandal and quarrels? What use the railway if it only enables us to invade an enemy's country more quickly?

Far more beautiful and desirable is the time when love for our nearest has spread and become a wide love for all our fellow-creatures; when justice and compassion are not confined to the borders of our own country, but will connect the different parts of the earth and pass from one to another like the electric message of the telephone. We hope for a future when not only every land and house will be connected by the telephone, but where grief will find consolation and sympathy and where no cry for help shall be uttered in vain; where none will leave his brother in scorn and anger, but will repent and be reconciled before days and weeks shall have hardened his heart. Then all hearts will be drawn together. But without all this the web of wires from house to house, the whistle of the locomotive, and the ring of the telephone bell will be vain and useless.

## CHAPTER XV

WHAT OUR MUSIC LESSONS MAY TEACH US



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#### THE OLD PIANO

IN a "Rest House" in the Black Forest stood an old piano. The schoolmaster played for the peasants who came up from the valleys to dance. In the evening when the visitors sat together the old piano was hammered and banged to accompany students' songs, and to follow every voice untiringly, till the hostess came in and turned out the lights. Then it would stand lonely till the first student began strumming again in the morning.

Who would wonder that it lost its tone under such treatment and could accompany the singers only with thin, feeble notes?

One evening a great artist came to the Rest House, just as the sun's last rays sank into the Rhine and glided behind the Vosges mountains.

He sat down at the piano and struck some chords gently. It responded softly and like a tiny child addressed by a man. But the artist's heart was too full to be content with that. He struck some chords powerfully, as if he wanted to caress and move it to its innermost depths. It seemed then as if the old piano suddenly woke up. The guests at the table listened to

the wonderful harmony which began to steal out across the darkening scene. It seemed as if the old piano began to sing from its heart everything that it had been obliged for years to stifle under dance music and street songs. It seemed to the guests as if all the chords in their own hearts began to vibrate tempestuously. There was a breathless silence. One triumphant clash of chords, and the artist ceased abruptly.

For long after the guests had gone to bed the old piano stood trembling in its corner. The hostess said next day that it had vibrated softly the whole night through.

But the artist had gone on his journey before sunrise. The piano had the same cracked and lifeless tone as before. "What an old tin pot!" said the people, and banged away on it as before.

Do you know that this old piano suffered the very same treatment many people in life undergo? They are ill-treated by strummers; they never meet a master in the art of loving sympathy who knows how to awaken their hidden life. And if they do meet him, he leaves before sunrise. Not only with pianos does much depend on who plays and how he plays, and whether he knows how to strike the chords with power and tenderness, but also the music given forth by human hearts depends on the players who strike their chords of feeling.



## THE SECOND PART

So to-day you have had your first lesson in part singing, and you have tried to sing the second part? It was not easy, was it? What was the difficulty? I suppose you found that the other voices influenced you and made you take on their tone instead of keeping to your own part. There is a continual battle between the first and second voices. The strongest is apt to lead the others away. It is very tempting when the tune sounds so close to your ear. You must not listen to it, but pay attention only to your own notes. Besides that, you should often practise your own melody when you are alone, and then even in the chorus you will keep true to it.

We may use this to illustrate many of our difficulties in real life. You know in real life a great deal depends on being able to keep to your own tone and not being led away by the other voices. For example, if your brother speaks to you in a domineering tone it is very difficult to keep to your own true and quiet voice and not be influenced by his. Imagine that some one is listening to you in the next room. If you both quarrel and speak roughly there would be one continuous interchange of loud and violent sounds. But if one of you takes the second part, the quiet calm part, there will be first a loud and rough tone, and then a soft and serious one. Gradually the soft and gentle voice will overcome the other and there will be peace.

What you learn in the singing lesson with regard to firmness and steadfastness of tone will stand you in good stead when you are talking with people who tempt you to lose your own quiet tone. Then again, if in conversation with your brother and sisters you succeed in keeping your own friendly tone, you will find it easier to keep it when you are with a greater number of people.

Tell me, why do we sing in parts at all? Only to make the harmony more pleasing, is it not? Yes, and also because we can give greater expression to the melody. The different instruments in an orchestra serve to give expression to various moods; so in singing, the different parts are not only for the purpose of getting a greater volume of sound, but also to get greater variety of expression. One day I will play you something of Beethoven's, and you will be able to hear how some of the parts of the music sound glad and triumphant, while others are gloomy and struggling. In this way the soul of man with its many moods is more truly expressed than could be done by means of one single part. Take a song like "Summer's Coming." What does the tune express? Gladness and happiness in life. But if the second part were sung alone it would seem sad and gloomy. The second voice seems to remind us, in the midst of all our joy, that flowers fade, that many people weep while we rejoice, and many suffer while we are glad. But when both the voices sing together the song sounds strong and glad,

with a gentle sadness, and it is such earnest undertones that sanctify the joy.'

You see, therefore, that the second voice is not a mere servant of the first and made to enhance its beauty. It has its own proper task, and sometimes it is the more beautiful. It serves truth, and tries to remind us of those things which we overlook and forget when we are touched by other feelings.

These things always make me think of our own everyday life. There are so many who, as we say, always want to play the first fiddle, and there are also those who are willing to play the second fiddle, or take the second place. In every house, in every profession, you find it so. There are many people who are frightfully unhappy when they have to sing the second part or play the second fiddle; when they have to do the unnoticed work and remain in the background. But they should remember that the second part may express so very much that the first part neglects and leaves quite alone, and often this is the more delicate and tender part. Many a man who is not gifted with brilliant talents and gets little consideration, and has to fill a subordinate, modest place, may express such fidelity and kindness in little things that he complements and makes up for what the great and successful in the midst of their fame have neither time nor attention.

## SINGING SOFTLY

WHICH do you think is the easier, to sing loudly or to sing softly?

To sing loudly. Every boy can shout.

To sing softly is more difficult because it compels us to exercise greater control over our voices than is needed when singing loudly.

Try to sing softly, paying attention to your feelings, and you will find that you are quite conscious of a muscular effort to control the voice and produce the required volume of sound.

It is not only a singing lesson which teaches you to modulate your voice.

You can practise modulation everywhere at any time. If father and mother are taking a rest, you can speak in soft low tones. You have a great opportunity when your brothers and sisters are inclined to shout at their play, or be noisy and quarrelsome; you should speak calmly and gently in return. There is a certain thought you should have in your mind as a charm against the temptation to be noisy also. Remember that noise is not a sign of strength, but rather of weakness. If you cannot control your voice it may run away with you like a horse with an unskilful rider.

You see clearly then that to modulate the voice to a gentle and low tone can be learnt in your daily intercourse with one another.

When I have a singing class before me I can always

tell which of the pupils has had this kind of practice or not, and those who have, find the singing lesson much easier to them.

#### THE STORY OF THE VOICE

I WOULD like to speak to-day of the expression of the voice. I will not hide from you that the right expression must spring from the heart.

The teacher cannot teach, but only point out the means of using the voice so as to express the feelings. Take the song "O'er our hearts sweet peace is stealing." If you wish to sing this with expression you must really love peace; then it will come out in the voice.

Any one who does not love peace will never succeed, try how he will to get the true expression. The whole tone will be without a peaceful sound, for the voice takes the tone that the person most often uses. If he scolds and grumbles much, his voice will grow harsh, cold, and sharp. Every voice has its history, which can be read by a clever observer, who feels what tone the voice most often takes on. Have you ever listened to a voice through a telephone when there is nothing to draw the attention to anything else? How easily you can form an opinion of the person by the voice. By some you feel repelled, by some attracted. The expression of the voice depends on its history. Happily we can somewhat determine this history. You must keep your voice from crying and shouting if you wish to sing beautifully and pleasingly, and,

above all, preserve it from quarrelling and rough talk. Then you will get a good tone.

#### TO STRIKE THE RIGHT NOTE

WHEN singing, you must often have found how difficult it is to get the right note. Many people find it very difficult indeed and generally raise the voice to a false pitch.

Yet even with them much may be attained by practice and attention.

However, to learn to strike a key in singing is only one step in the cultivation of the voice. The voice is used not only in singing, and how much more difficult it is to strike the right tone in our conversation with one another. We have to learn how to use a soothing, gentle tone, instead of an exciting, agitating one. We must cultivate a tone in which we can blame without wounding and correct without making a person nervous.

Any declaration of opinion should be uttered modestly, at least without arrogant sharpness. Yes, if we could trace the influence of tone we should be surprised to see how greatly success in life depends on knowing how to strike the right key in our converse with others. Unfortunately, in this art, lessons from a teacher are not of much use. You have to teach yourself by practice, by thought and sympathy, and by learning the feelings of others. Then your own heart will tell you the right tone to use.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST UNHAPPINESS





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#### ANGEL'S WINGS

PROBABLY you have all heard the story of the poor little hunchback whose weakness shut him out from the games of the other boys, who laughed at his deformity? One beautiful spring day this poor boy died, and when he was being laid in his grave and all the people were standing round they suddenly saw in place of the ugly hump a pair of beautiful white wings appear, which carried him up to heaven before their astonished gaze.

This story seemed to me to have a beautiful meaning, and awakened many, many thoughts in my mind as I read it. The writer must have had a deep understanding of life.

We often find in our dealings with our fellow-creatures that there are some handsome people who are cold-hearted and selfish; while the homely features of others are lighted up with the glow of love and thought for others which makes them veritable angels in disguise. Truly, it appears as if beautiful people sometimes imagine their beauty alone can win and please, and that they themselves need take no trouble to make

their hearts beautiful. Through this great mistake their inner life remains poor and bare. On the other hand, the plain people feel that the only charm which can bind people to them is love and kindness and other good qualities. This leads them to try hard to find the path to goodness, and they thus find it more easily than the conceited people. So their ugliness may be a blessing which protects them from vanity and conceit, and keeps them modest and kind.

Have you ever noticed that people who have been spoilt and indulged think only of themselves? So that when their desires are thwarted and life does not run quite as smoothly as they wish they become bitter and disappointed and impatient. You may also have had an opportunity of seeing how others are influenced by a great sorrow or by physical suffering. It is not possible for such people to dance in gay assemblies or to become dazzled by their own success. They learn to renounce and sacrifice their own wishes, and in this way they have thoughts and feelings to devote to others. They become angels to their fellow-creatures. I once knew a girl, long dead, who was a daughter in a large family, and she had a real hump on her back. Yet she was the sunshine of that family and shed a light of love on her brothers and sisters which was wonderful and beautiful to see, and I really believe that her burden was a pair of angel's wings.

Many people have such burdens. Sometimes it consists of suffering a grief, a great disappointment, or an

irreparable loss. Whether they develop angel's wings or only a bitter face and a sorrowful heart depends on whether the suffering awakens the power of ministering love and patience in their souls. This heavenly power seldom matures in a man when he has been granted all his wishes and has never encountered sorrow or had to renounce.

Trouble and misfortune do not alone concern grown-up people. Children are often harassed by illness or left alone in the world by the death of relations. Misery or want may even enter into their homes. Then everything depends on how they bear their troubles. If any such dark cloud hovers over your home, have patience and say to yourself, "Now I am given the opportunity to learn some of the most important lessons that men ever have to learn—that is patience which never wearies, sympathy without querulousness, and the quiet help which finds the way of comfort and consolation." This is the great secret and charm of a brave heart.

#### BLESSED ARE THOSE THAT MOURN

HAVE you ever heard the words of Christ, "Blessed are they that mourn"? In what way are we to understand this? How can any one be blessed or happy when he suffers a misfortune? Do we not do everything in our power to prevent a misfortune? And now we are told that it is good for us when we suffer. How

is this to be explained? How can suffering be good for us?

Tell me which develops your muscles most, to go up a mountain in the railway carriage or to climb up on your own feet? The answer is clear. It is better for us to overcome the ascent ourselves than to let the railway do it for us. Do you not also think it is good in the same way for us to have difficulties and trouble to fight against in life, rather than have everything go easily for us and everything that we want granted to us at once? Our character is not strengthened in this way and our eyes remain shut to so much that we might learn and understand in our own and others' lives. The ravines and valleys of a mountain are better seen when you travel on foot; so the meaning and the sorrow and beauty of life are better understood by going through misfortune than by remaining always indulged and fortunate.

He who has never been ill cannot know how a sick person feels, and so cannot gain the deepest sympathy for those that are sick and weak. He has also no idea of the force and determination needed to overcome the flesh by the spirit. He has had no opportunity of proving this. Therefore, blessed are those who have been sick and had the opportunity to spiritually strengthen themselves in the struggle with their animal nature. An invalid often feels most keenly his enforced inactivity, and forgets that his patient and loving converse with those that tend him is activity of

a different kind, and of a kind which may make him the teacher and guardian angel of all that serve him and hear him. So suffering may be made a means of blessing to himself and those around. In this way brave souls will think of suffering as a trial of strength and a gain instead of merely as a misfortune.

Imagine that the father of a family has just died. Surely this is the greatest sorrow that can befall any one. But the consolation Christ would offer would be, "Turn your suffering into a blessing; try and take the place of a father to your younger brothers and sisters and be a help and support to your mother." The fact that life is made more difficult for you brings you duties and gives meaning and use to your services which ought to make you happy and be some consolation for the sorrow. Your will and love may become richer and stronger through the greater tasks you have now to perform.

Or take the case of money trouble in your home. What blessing do you think may be drawn from this? Perhaps it would bring the different members of the family still closer together in love and sympathy; you would all grow to be more unselfish and learn the lesson of self-sacrifice; this would be a blessing and a source of strength for all your later life. To learn such lessons in early years makes us readier and riper for our own battle with fate, and more considerate and kinder to others whose lives may be bound up with our own.

Goethe, the great German poet, once wrote these beautiful lines:—

“ Who never ate with tears his bread,  
Who never through night's heavy hours  
Sat weeping on his lonely bed—  
He knows you not, ye heavenly powers.”

The heavenly powers! these are all the helpful thoughts and examples of patience and steadfastness which arise from the thoughts and lives of great men and only really begin to deeply impress us and illuminate our path when misfortunes overtake us, just as the stars remain hidden to us till the sun goes down. He who has never eaten his bread with tears cannot know these heavenly powers.

#### THE CALL TO ARMS

THERE is an old Grecian story of the Trojan war which you may have heard. The mother of Achilles wished to hide him and prevent him from going into battle, and so dressed him in girl's clothes and had him brought up among the king's daughters. Ulysses determined, however, to get him into the camp and said, “ I will soon find out which is the boy among the girls.” So he ordered the call to arms to be trumpeted suddenly before the palace where Achilles was hidden. The girls all ran away terrified, but the boy sprang up and seized the weapons hanging on the walls. In this way he was recognised.

This may be a little illustration for us of what goes on in the every-day world. When misfortune or calamity knocks at the door it is easy to distinguish the heroes from the cowards and weaklings. The brave man will grasp his weapons and muster the resources of his character and not allow himself to be attacked and vanquished. He will be invulnerable like Achilles because he will possess the power of turning a misfortune to his advantage and adversity into a blessing. For the great value of the fight against misfortune and unhappiness is that it teaches us to draw a higher good out of it instead of being crushed and spoilt by it. Instead of fainting or retreating we learn to stand firm and grasp our weapons.

I once heard of a boy who was completely crushed and dispirited because he had not been moved up at school. The trumpet call of trouble and misfortune sounded in his life and he was overcome with apprehension and despair, instead of making this defeat in his work a means of greater strength and happiness later on. He should have followed the example of the magicians in the fairy tales who forced the bad spirits into their service and made them find jewels and gold.

What are the weapons then to be used against the defeat of not being moved up at school? First, the determination to gather new strength from this defeat, to form new resolutions which perhaps you would never have formed if everything had gone smoothly. Next, the resolve to make up in other directions what you

have lost in this; for instance, it might teach you to be a comfort to your mother in other ways, to show that you had not failed at school for want of love and regard for her; it might teach you to be an example of kindness and patience to your brothers and sisters and a happy influence in the whole household. A whole armoury of weapons hangs at your disposal. You only need to grasp them—numbers of new habits are waiting to be formed, and new resolves made.

Have you ever watched a blacksmith working the metal with his brawny muscles? Or have you ever been in a factory where the raw metal is carried into the workshops on one side and where the carts carry away all kinds of utensils ready made on the other? We should all be smiths of a different kind. Misfortune is the raw material and you are the smith, and you work and work at the raw material till you make out of it a brave, active, happy life.



## CHAPTER XVII

### HUMILITY



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#### THE DANGER OF RICHES

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Have you any idea what these words of Christ really mean?

Let us take a smaller example. Do you think it dangerous for a boy to have very much pocket-money? If so, why? I think it is, because he may become so used to having everything he wants that this easy gratification of all his wishes may make him spoilt and self-indulgent.

The appetite for good things to eat and for having his own way may become stronger than his consideration for others. He may grow cold-hearted and selfish and only think of his dear self.

I do not say that every boy with much pocket-money would act like this. But the danger is great. It is very difficult to restrain oneself and remain simple and temperate. It is for this reason that a rich child must guard against selfishness and love of good things and keep a ten - thousandfold greater watch over himself

than a poor child need. For circumstances deny the poor many nice things which the rich child has to deny *himself*. A very strong will is needed to do this, and every one has not got a strong will. Hence comes the saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

But greediness is not the only danger. On every side the rich child is tempted. For instance, he is tempted to treat people contemptuously and in a high-handed way. Many people will bow to his father's wealth and allow him to do things which they would punish in a poor man's son. Thus the unfortunate rich child has his faults hidden from him, till the day comes when he will have to mix with the great world outside his home circle. Then he will find that his bad habits will only bring him the dislike and disgust of other people with whom he comes in contact.

The old Greeks believed that the vengeance of the gods fell on those who were too prosperous and whose wishes were all fulfilled.

The German poet Schiller has a poem called the "Ring of Polycrates." There was a king called Polycrates who had prospered in everything he undertook. For fear of the vengeance of the gods he tried to propitiate them by throwing a precious ring in the river. A fish swallowed the ring, and a fisherman brought it back to the king, after finding it in the stomach of a fish he had caught. Thereupon Polycrates was forsaken

by all his friends, and shortly afterwards the kingdom fell to ruin.

This story is only intended to illustrate the truth that happiness and good fortune may easily lead people to be presumptuous, careless, and conceited, so that the hatred and envy of all those who have been neglected or offended gather over their heads and darken and embitter their lives.

It is no protection to throw a ring in the water. The gods shake their heads at that. If one of you who are rich should throw a precious porcelain vase at home to the ground and break it in a thousand pieces, and say, when your frightened mother rushes to the scene, "I wanted to reconcile the gods to our good fortune," you would show that you do not understand the gods. No, much more than that is necessary. You must sacrifice your own self-conceit and try to think daily of others and how to treat subordinates and humble people with tact and courtesy. That is much more difficult than throwing a ring in the water. But such sacrifices please the gods. That is, the love that we give becomes a sacred protection, which is with us in all our actions and undertakings.

#### THE DANGERS OF CLIMBING

THE risks and dangers of mountaineering are often being brought to our notice. During the summer scarcely a day passes but the papers report some

disaster or accident to mountaineers. Avalanches, falling rocks, mists, crevices in the glaciers, or landslides are the most notorious dangers. But one of the most serious is the giddiness to which mountaineers are sometimes subject.

If only the climber would keep his eyes fixed on the point he is trying for he might reach the top in safety. But he is tempted to look down at the villages lying deep in the valleys. He wishes to see how far he has already climbed, and how high above the world he is. But on looking below a magic force seems to drag him downward; so he becomes giddy and within a few seconds he may be lying in the depths below from which he had so slowly and painfully climbed.

I have once seen a wonderful picture. It showed a man ascending a high and difficult mountain; all round him rolled the white and dazzling mists, while clinging round his neck was a mysterious spirit of the vapours trying to draw him downwards.

I would like to use this picture to illustrate something more than mountaineering, more than the climbing of precipices. It may illustrate for us the behaviour of men and women in life. When a man desires to become better and purer, and he manfully strives to rise above the misty valley of lower wishes to the pure and shining heights of self-government, he is surrounded by grave dangers. There is for him also the terrible danger of a fall if he loses sight of his high aim and gazes downwards and backwards to enjoy his superiority

over others who still remain in the shadow of the valleys while he is flooded with the early beams of the golden morning sunlight.

When we strive to become nobler and better we should never look back in a boastful spirit or we shall be overcome by the giddiness of pride or arrogance and fall back into the depths from which we rose. For proud self-righteousness brings the greatest downfall possible to man. His high attainment will have been in vain if he fall into the valley of coldness of heart. It will then be impossible for him ever to reach the shining heights.

There is only one cure, one preventive, for this kind of giddiness. That is to keep the high goal for ever before our eyes, to contemplate the brave example set us by the best and noblest people the world has known, and to realise how far below them we are and how far we have yet to climb. Above all, we should never boast of how much we have achieved.











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